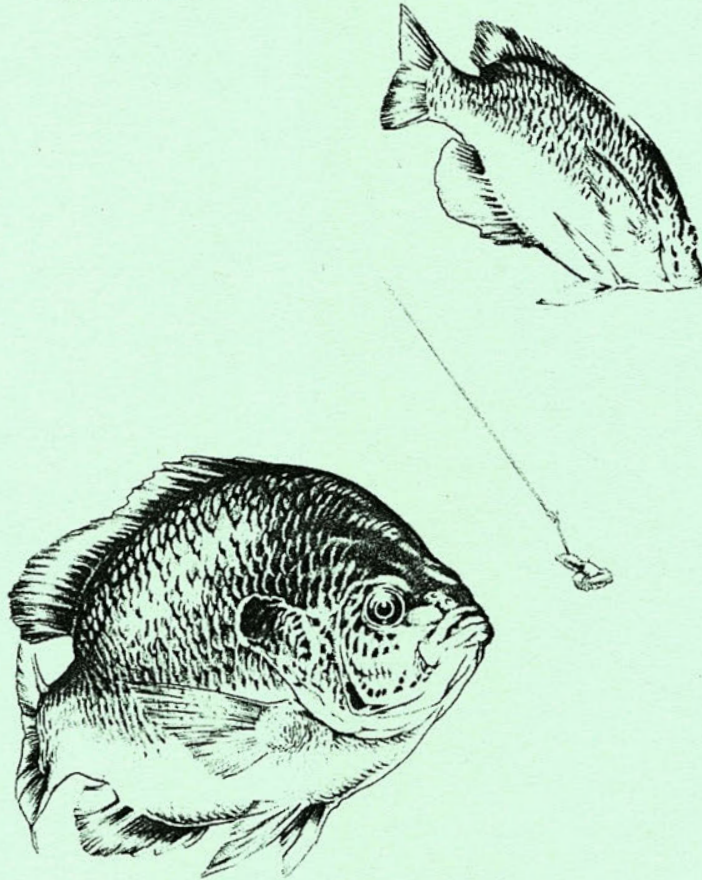
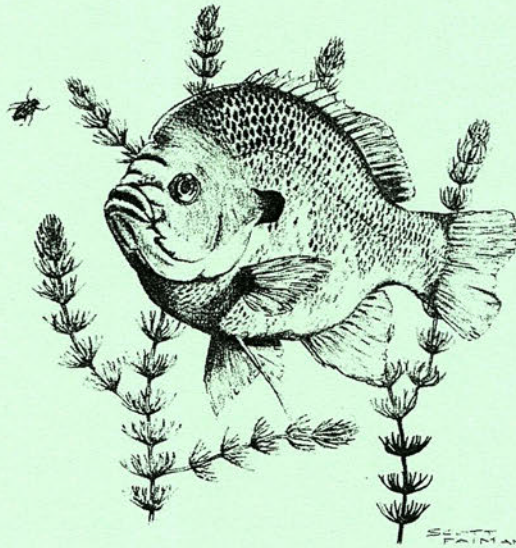


**Fishing Prospects  
At Selected  
Missouri Lakes and Streams  
2025**  
*FINAL PRINTED VERSION*



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## Missouri Department of Conservation Regions



## A few words about *Prospects*

*Due to reduced demand, this will be the last printed version of this publication.*

*Annual Prospects will continue to be found online at <https://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/fishing-prospects> and as a feature of the free “MO Fishing” app at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zoh>.*

*Prospects is a modification of monitoring surveys written by the biologists managing those bodies of water referenced. The data is taken from sampling fish populations, creel surveys, and other fisheries research.*

*If a particular body of water is not mentioned here, do not assume that it means the fishing will not be good. It just means the information was not available at the time of printing for this publication.*

Ultimately the test of any lake or stream is to fish it. Fishing success varies with the experience of the angler, gear and method, weather, or any number of variables. Hopefully the information found here will help anglers be more successful.

We encourage you to perform your own survey, or fish new waters. You can find your way to fishing areas by going to <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zq5>.

### Send questions or comments to:

Fisheries Section

P.O. Box 180

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180

## Don't Pick Up Hitchhikers!



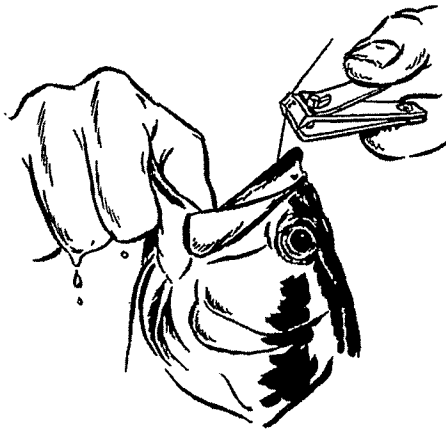
- Dump bait buckets on shore
- Rinse boats and livewells on shore

## Slow the Spread of the Zebra Mussel



## **Discover Nature — Fishing**

***Free, hands-on fishing instruction***



- **Lesson one:** Equipment, Casting, and Proper Fish Handling
- **Lesson two:** How to Tie a Knot and Bait a Hook
- **Lesson three:** Five Common Missouri Fish - Their Anatomy, Habitat, and Life Cycle
- **Lesson four:** Fishing with Lures and Fishing Regulations

More advanced classes are now being offered.

Learn about **Discover Nature – Fishing** classes at your local Department of Conservation office or at [dnf.mdc.mo.gov](http://dnf.mdc.mo.gov).

## **Discover Nature — Fishing Volunteers**

If you love sharing your passion for fishing with others, we've got a great volunteer opportunity for you!

We need experienced anglers in communities all around Missouri to help kids and families learn to fish through our free Discover Nature — Fishing Program.

Learn about **Discover Nature – Fishing Volunteer** training classes at your local Department of Conservation office or search Fishing Volunteer at [dnf.mdc.mo.gov](http://dnf.mdc.mo.gov).

# Attention Anglers

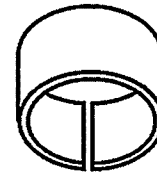
## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

### Paddlefish Tagging Project

MDC concluded a paddlefish tagging project to improve paddlefish management. Both legal and sublegal paddlefish have been tagged in Lake of the Ozarks, Harry S. Truman Reservoir, Table Rock Lake, and the Mississippi River.



Paddlefish tag



Tag located on lower jaw

Tags or photos of tags must be sent in for verification  
(Tags will be returned upon request)

Do NOT remove tags from SUBLEGAL paddlefish.

When you catch a tagged paddlefish write down the following information:

- Date Harvested, Tag Number, Eye to Fork Length, Name & Address
- Where (Reservoir or River/Mile Marker/County) caught.

Please call or mail this information with tag from harvested fish to:

Missouri Department of Conservation  
2302 County Park Drive  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
573-290-5858



## Thank You.



## Test Your Skills and earn MISSOURI'S Smallmouth Slam



### Here's How it Works

MDC and Missouri Smallmouth Alliance invite you to go out and test your skills against these smallmouth bass in the riffles and pools of Missouri's twelve special management areas.

The Missouri Smallmouth Slam **honors anglers who can catch a smallmouth bass in at least 6 of these 12 streams**. Catch a smallmouth bass in more than 6 special management areas and your level of achievement goes up.

To learn more visit:

**[mdc.mo.gov/smallmouthslam](http://mdc.mo.gov/smallmouthslam)**



## Test Your Skills and earn MISSOURI'S Blue Ribbon Trout Slam



### Here's How it Works

MDC and Trout Unlimited invite you to go out and test your skills against these trout in the riffles and pools of Missouri's nine Blue Ribbon trout streams.

The Missouri Blue Ribbon Trout Slam **honors anglers who can catch a trout in at least 5 of these 9 streams.** Catch a trout in more than 5 Blue Ribbon streams and your level of achievement goes up.

To learn more visit:  
**[mdc.mo.gov/troutslam](http://mdc.mo.gov/troutslam)**



## Lakes

### August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas

(Saint Louis Region)

#### Information

636-441-4554



Handicap Accessible

#### Best Bets

Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish, Rainbow Trout, Crappie, White, Muskellunge, Flathead Catfish

#### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** are plentiful, but most are smaller than the 15-inch length limit in lakes 3, 5, 9, 10, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 37 and Fire Lake on adjacent Weldon Spring CA. Use small spinner baits, crankbaits, and topwater baits along rocky shorelines, brush piles, and in weedy coves for best results. The best lake for big largemouth bass will again be lakes 33, 36, and 38. Lakes 6, 11, 21, and 28 and Prairie Lake on nearby Weldon Spring CA are also big bass lakes. In spring and fall, bass will be in shallow water and can be caught on spinnerbaits, jig and pig, and crankbaits. Rock on the lake dams are especially good locations to try in late winter/early spring. In the summer fish go to deeper, cooler water. Bigger bass can be caught along rock dams and drop-offs near log structures. Plastic worms, crankbaits, and jig and pigs are productive in early morning and evening hours.

**White crappie** will again be plentiful in Lake 33. Please remove all sizes of crappie up to the daily limit of 30. Although you can occasionally catch large crappie in Lake 33, better lakes to catch larger crappie are Lakes 6, 19, 20, 21, 23, 30, 35, 36 and 38, and Fire Lake in Weldon Spring CA. The best crappie fishing is from mid-March through mid-May. Lakes 33 and 35 feature several large brush and pallet piles (follow the "Crappie brush pile" signs) to enhance crappie fishing. Hundreds of Christmas trees were recycled into Lake 35 brush piles during Winter 2019-20.

**Channel catfish** will be best at lake 7 where catfish are stocked April through September. Lakes where channel catfish greater than 10 pounds are

consistently caught include lakes 33 and 35. Lake 38 also provides larger catfish.

**Flathead catfish** continue to provide high-quality opportunities at Lake 33 with fish larger than 20 pounds being present. Live bait fished along the rock dams, under logs, and in root wads will produce the best results.

**Blue catfish** opportunities are relatively new to the Busch Area, but are developing in Lake 33. Live or cut bait may produce best results.

**Bluegill** larger than 7 inches should be best in lakes 6, 16, and 35, and Fire Lake on Weldon Spring CA. If you want lots of action, try lakes 3, 5, 9, 21, 22, 23, 30, 33, 36, and 38 where there are many 4-6-inch bluegill. Light lines, small jigs tipped with waxworms, worms or crickets have produced results in spring near brush and weed lines. Try fishing for **redeer sunfish** in lakes 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38, and Fire Lake on Weldon Spring CA.

**Rainbow trout** will be available in lakes 3, 7, 21, 22, and 23 for excellent winter fishing, beginning in November. Lakes 7 and 21 host catch-and-release, artificial lures only fishing November through January and then allow harvest under statewide regulations. Though prepared baits continue to provide good action in trout harvest lakes, very light lines/tippets with 1/64-ounce black jigs or flies continue to be very productive.

**Muskies** will provide good fishing at Lake 35. Four muskies over 40 inches were captured during spring 2024 sampling efforts, with the largest at 43.0 inches. Plastic swim baits, large crankbaits, and bucktail spinners have been most productive. Several cedar tree and Christmas tree piles were added in 2020 to help concentrate muskies.

**Hybrid-Striped Bass** have been stocked in lakes 7, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 38. The daily limit is 4 with a minimum length limit of 20 inches. Fish with cut bait or crankbaits, soft plastic jerk baits, spinner baits or casting spoons that resemble shad during dawn and dusk when fish are most active.

#### Driving Directions

In St. Charles County, south on Highway 94 from Interstate 64, then west 1.5 miles on Route D.

#### Binder Lake

(Central Region)

#### Information

573-815-7900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White, Bluegill

### Prospects

Binder Lake (150 acres) is situated on Dickerson Creek in the Ozark border region of Missouri on 710 acres of Jefferson City parkland. The park (managed by Jefferson City Parks and Recreation; 573-634-6482) contains numerous amenities including an RV campground, pavilions with picnic tables and barbecue grills, hiking trails, and public restrooms. The restrooms are open approximately April to November. The lake (managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation) has a concrete boat ramp, a disabled-accessible fishing dock and jetty, and two courtesy docks to assist boaters. **Largemouth bass** fishing should be much better in 2025. Electrofishing samples in 2024 sampled more bass over 15" than in previous years. Fish survey showed 30% of all bass sampled were over 15" and 8% were over 20". **Bluegill** fishing will be about the same in 2025 as in 2024. For bluegill that were sampled in 2024 43% were between 6-8". In the fall of 2024, the Missouri Department of Conservation stocked 4,000 additional **channel catfish**. The fish were 8-12" when stocked, so in 1-2 years these fish will make nice filets. Spring of 2024 electrofishing sampling showed **redeer sunfish** are numerous in the 7-9". Crappie collected in the spring survey, showed both white and black crappie are found in Binder Lake. **White crappie** were the most numerous species collected with 20% over 10" and 13% over 12", one white crappie was over 15". **Black crappie** will have a good population of fish between 8 and 10". In 2025, there should be a good number of black and white crappie over 9" available to anglers.

### Driving Directions

Take Highway 50 west from Jefferson City, MO, to the Apache Flats/St. Martin's exit, continue west on Business 50 for 1.2 miles. Turn right (north) on South Binder Lake Road. Go 0.3 miles and then turn left (west) on Rainbow Drive. Go 0.2 miles, crossing over the upper end of Binder Lake, and then turn right on Binder Park Road. Binder Park Road winds along the west side of the lake where there are docks, a boat ramp, and jetties.

### Blind Pony Lake

(Central Region)

### Information

573-815-7900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should be good. Try fishing near felled trees, riprap embankments, and brush piles. **Crappie** fishing will be good. Most of the fish will be around 8-10 inches, however, it is not uncommon to catch a few in the 12-14" range. The best way to catch them is fishing tube jigs under a bobber anywhere from the bank in April and Early May. During summer months, try fishing around submerged trees further out in the lake, and closer to the bank again when temperatures begin to cool in the fall. Jigging with lightweight tackle in the deeper parts of the lake is an effective method during the winter and early spring months. The bite is nearly imperceptible, so light gear is necessary. **Bluegill** can be caught all year with worms or small jigs and should be very good. Sampling data showed numerous fish in the 7-8" range. **Redear sunfish** fishing should be fair. Most of the fish will be around 9 inches with some over 10 inches. Fishing for **channel catfish** should be good, using prepared baits at the jetties and fishing dock. The channel catfish population is maintained by regular stocking by the Department of Conservation. **Blue catfish** populations and size are improving and fishing for them should be fair. MDC has maintained annual stockings of blue catfish since 2019. There are confirmed reports of 20lb. Blue Catfish that have been caught by anglers over the last year. They can be caught on prepared catfish baits, cut bait, or live sunfish. It is prohibited to have bait held in containers of water on Blind Pony Lake Conservation Area, therefore, any live bait will need to be caught from Blind Pony Lake using pole and line methods for immediate use. This regulation is to prevent unwanted aquatic organisms from entering the hatchery water source.

There are several regulations in place that will lessen the chances of an accidental introduction of zebra mussels into Blind Pony Lake. Zebra mussels are an invasive species that have caused numerous problems

in other states and would be very disruptive for the hatchery if they were introduced into Blind Pony Lake. Private boats are prohibited on this lake; boats and oars for use on the lake are provided free of charge on a first come, first served basis, and anglers may use their own electric trolling motors on MDC boats. Anglers will be required to supply their own flotation devices. As mentioned above, bait transported or held in containers with water is also prohibited.

### Driving Directions

Blind Pony Lake (195 acres) is the water supply for the Missouri Department of Conservation's Blind Pony Hatchery. Blind Pony Lake is located on Pony Creek in a prairie region between Marshall and Sweet Springs. To get to the lake from I-70 Exit 66 (Sweet Springs), go north on MO-127 for 0.8 miles, then go northeast (right) on MO-ZZ. Proceed 5.7 miles to the conservation area.

## Blue Springs Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Flathead Catfish

### Prospects

The **hybrid striped bass** population is one of the best kept secrets in the Kansas City area. Over 7,000 young hybrids are stocked annually to maintain the population. Trolling or looking for schooling fish on the surface chasing shad are the best methods for locating hybrids. Once located by trolling, you can cast deep diving lures or jigging spoons to the area. Anglers should also look for schooling hybrids at the upper end of the lake near the Lake Jacomo spillway when water is flowing into Blue Springs Lake. The dam and windy main lake points in late summer and early fall can be very productive. Though hard to fish at times, the hybrid striped bass will be just offshore on windy points and banks as they pursue shad. Trolling diving crankbaits along drop-offs can be productive. Also, watch for hybrid striped bass hitting shad on the main lake side off the Woods Chapel bridge most of the season. Fish 10 pounds

and larger are not uncommon, so heavier fishing gear should be used.

The **largemouth bass** fishing will be fair for both legal (greater-than 15-inches) and sublegal (less-than 15-inches) fish. Anglers should concentrate their efforts along the outside edges of the weed beds and in the fallen timber east of Woods Chapel Road. Lay down trees along the main lake shoreline seem to always hold fish and using a plastic worm or slow-moving bait can induce strikes in heavy cover. In the fall, try the drop-offs on the main lake and the channels in the coves. **Black crappie** are smaller and more abundant than **white crappie**, but fish over 10 inches can be readily caught. Fish the standing timber and brush piles during all times of the year except the spawning season. During the spawning season, gravel banks and steep cut banks hold lots of fish. Laydowns and rocks can concentrate fish in April. In the fall, crappie move shallow again to feed heavily before winter. Target the same areas you do in the spring.

**Channel catfish** provide excellent fishing from April through October. Only rod and reel fishing is allowed. Fish on the flats near Woods Chapel Road or along the dam in June. Prepared baits work well most of the year but live bait along the dam in June is very effective. Don't limit yourself to just night crawlers either, live sunfish can be excellent bait in June. The **flathead catfish** population is well established and fish up to 50+ pounds can be caught. Live bait is a necessity when fishing for large flatheads and green sunfish can be caught in the rocks along the dam for bait. Fish the standing timber along the edges of the channels and in the mouth of timbered coves. The dam can be productive as well. In the spring of 2024, brush piles were introduced in the northern end of the lake near the dam and boat ramp to increase available habitat. Locations of brush piles can be found on [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

Eurasian water milfoil continues to be the dominant species of aquatic vegetation in the lake. To help avoid spreading this invasive plant, take care to wash water milfoil from boats and trailers before transporting to other waterbodies. Anglers should also take care when moving from lake to lake to disinfect their boats to prevent the spread of zebra mussels. Zebra mussels were discovered in Blue Springs Lake in 2017. Please clean, drain, and dry your boat before taking it to another lake.

### Driving Directions

On Highway 291/I-470 south of I-70, take the Lakewood/Bowlin Road exit, turn east, follow Bowlin Road until it ends at the lake and marina.

## Brookfield City Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

660-646-6122



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Crappie, Black, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass

### Prospects

This 118-acre lake provides excellent **Largemouth bass** fishing. A 12- to 15-inch protected slot length limit continues to improve the bass population. 2024 sampling data showed 32% of the largemouth bass were 12-to-15- inches in length with 10% above 15-inches. Anglers should focus their harvest on bass less than 12 inches long to keep the bass from overpopulating. Larger bass can be released to fight again. A high-quality **channel catfish** population exists in the lake. Most of the catfish are from 15 to 18 inches long. Anglers should use night crawlers or prepared baits fished off the bottom. Anglers interested in panfishing will find good numbers of **bluegill**, and **crappie**. 2024 sampling data revealed that most crappie will be around 9 inches but there are a few that will reach 15 inches in length. Anglers should focus on removing as many crappie as they can to reduce the population so the remaining crappie can increase in size.

### Driving Directions

Take highway 11 north of Brookfield approximately 3 miles. the lake entrance will be on the north side of the road.

## Che-Ru Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Crappie, White, White Bass, Channel Catfish

## Prospects

Anglers have a variety of habitat features to target at this 160-acre lake. There are rocky banks around half of the shoreline, and under the water, timbered fence rows and rock reefs are scattered throughout the lake. Sampling consistently shows good numbers of 9 to 14-inch **white crappie**. Good numbers of **white bass** and **channel catfish** are also present at Che-Ru. The lake is closed to fishing from October 15th through February 15th when it becomes part of the waterfowl refuge at Fountain Grove Conservation Area. A concrete boat ramp, privy, and covered fishing dock are located on the west side of the lake. There is also an access road which allows anglers to fish 75% of the shoreline.

### Driving Directions

Take blacktop W south of Meadville, MO 4.6 mi. Take Bunker Rd. to T in road (approximately 1mi). Take a right (South) onto Crown Dr. and go approximately .4 mi. Lake will be located on your left (East side of road).

## Clearwater Lake

(Southeast Region)

### Information

573-663-7130

### Best Bets

Spotted Bass, Crappie, White, White Bass, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Clearwater Lake supports quality **largemouth bass** and **spotted bass** populations. During our 2024 annual spring electrofishing survey, 19% of the largemouth bass collected were > 15"; which is great. During an October 2024 electrofishing survey, we saw lots of bass in the 4-5 pound range and numerous 8-12 inch largemouth bass, which is a good sign for the future. Spotted bass are not as common as largemouth bass, but fish >14" are present. Clearwater Lake does not have a length limit on black bass.

During the spring 2024 fish survey, we captured numerous **white crappie** between 9 and 13 inches. Almost 72% of the white crappie collected were longer than 10", which is outstanding. The only poor news on the white crappie population is that the 2024 gizzard shad spawn was terrible. Young-of-the-year (YoY) gizzard shad are an important food source for white crappie. In October, YoY gizzard shad averaged 4.4 inches which is the largest seen in five

years. Consequently, the white crappie body condition (aka fatness) this fall was poor. Clearwater Lake supports a good **white bass** population. In April and early May, white bass migrate up the Black River to spawn; the best fishing is upstream of Bluff View Marina. White bass of 1-3 pounds are common.

**Channel catfish** are common, throughout the lake. **Flathead catfish** are also present in the lake in low numbers. Every year, anglers report catching a few 40-pound flathead catfish.

Every year the Corps of Engineers and Missouri Department of Conservation staff try to add fish habitat to the lake. In 2024, 14 porcupine cribs were placed in the lake. In addition, we plan to build multiple brush piles in the spring of 2025. Maps showing these locations can be obtained by contacting the Southeast Regional Office at 573-290-5730.

## Crowder State Park Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100

### Best Bets

Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

This 21-acre lake is located in Crowder State Park, west of Trenton, Missouri. **Largemouth bass** are numerous but rarely reach sizes greater than 15-16". However, the large numbers of bass fuel the excellent, trophy sunfish fishery.

Most **bluegill** captured during recent surveys were 7" or larger with 4% of the fish around 8-9". **Redear sunfish** regularly reach 9", and 12% of fish captured were 9-11". **White crappie** and **black crappie** are less numerous but reach sizes of 10-14". **Channel catfish** are popular at this lake. They are numerous and commonly range from 16-25" with some fish close to 30".

### Driving Directions

From Trenton, head west 2 miles on Missouri Highway 6, then turn north 1 mile on Missouri Highway 146 W.

## Davidson-Paris Lake

(Ozark Region)

### Best Bets

Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

With a limited amount of small public ponds in Howell County, this lake is a popular location for anglers. The dam and area on the northwest side of the lake is in grass and can be fished easily from the bank. The upper (south) end of the lake is best accessed by a kayak or other carry-in boat as it is surrounded by woods and bank fishing is difficult. Fishing in the spring can provide the best action around the spawn for active **largemouth bass** and sunfish in shallow water. **Bluegill** and **redeer sunfish** fishing should be good in 2025 as sunfish are abundant in the aquatic plant beds throughout the lake. The shallow, upper end of the lake is worth exploring as many of the larger bass were captured in this area in the most recent sample. Submerged aquatic vegetation increases during summer and early fall making angling more challenging, but sunfish are plentiful for the persistent angler. Fishing soft plastics, rigged weedless, can be a great option this time of year. Additionally, over 100 8-12" **channel catfish** are stocked each fall and can be fun to catch with stink bait or a worm on a bobber in the summer.

### Driving Directions

Davidson-Paris Wildlife Area is located about 6 miles northeast of West Plains, east of Hwy 17 and south of State Hwy EE. The five-acre lake is easily accessed by driving to the western parking lot, located on CR 3010, then taking a short downhill walk to the lake that can be seen approximately 350' below.

## DiSalvo Lake

(Southeast Region)

### Information

73-290-5730

### Best Bets

Redear Sunfish, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

DiSalvo Lake is 210-acre lake 20 miles southwest of Farmington, MO. This lake is heavily fished especially during the spring. **Largemouth bass** fishing should be fair in 2025. Bass densities remain low, but anglers will have a good chance at catching quality sized fish (>18"). In the 2024 spring fish population survey, 17% of the bass collected were > 18". **Bluegill** and **redeer sunfish** are abundant in the lake. Bluegill 6-7.5" are common, but only a few reach 8". Redear sunfish up to 11" are common. **Black crappie** and **white crappie** are

abundant in the lake. White crappie are the most common and make up 88% of the total crappie population. White crappie densities are increasing and anglers will catch a lot of 7-8" crappie. On average, only 8% of the white crappie are greater than 9 inches. Both black and white crappie growth rates are poor. To reduce crappie densities which might result in better growth rates, anglers are encouraged to harvest their daily limits. This lake supports both **yellow bullhead** and **channel catfish populations**. Bullheads are abundant and easily reach 10-12". Channel catfish are common and fish up to ten pounds are present. A concrete boat ramp, courtesy boat launching dock, and a paved fishing jetty are present at this lake.

### Driving Directions

From Bismarck, take Route N south, then Grider Road west to Lakeview Road, which leads to the area.

## Drywood Conservation Area

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417.895.6880

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Bluegill

### Prospects

This 100-acre conservation area has a two-acre pond that has largemouth bass, channel catfish, and bluegill present. **Channel catfish** should continue to provide good fishing as they are stocked every year into the pond. **Largemouth bass** should also provide poor fishing. The **bluegill** will make for good catch-and-release.

## Edwin A. Pape Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Flathead Catfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be good for both legal (greater than 15-inch) fish and sublegal (less than 15-inch) fish. The bass population is one of low density, yet high quality. Anglers report catching good numbers of all sizes of bass up to 20+ inches. Bass sampled in 2021 were in good condition with a few over 20-inches long. Try fishing with spinnerbaits, crankbaits and soft plastic worms off of points and near structure on the south side of the lake. **Crappie** fishing should be fair. The crappie population is stunted and there are numerous small, slow growing crappie less-than 8-inches in length. Anglers should expect to catch a lot of 5 to 7-inch crappie and are encouraged to harvest all sizes up to their daily limit of 30. Anglers report good fishing in the spring along the road bridge and in the cove with the jetty using jigs and/or minnows. Fishing for **bluegill** should be fair with fish up to 6.5 inches in length. Try fishing off of the bank with worms.

Catfish should continue to be good during the summer; please note that pole and line fishing is the only legal method to catch catfish. Each year, approximately 2,400 **channel catfish** (8-12 inches) are stocked in the fall. There are good numbers of all sizes of channel catfish up to 5+ pounds! Try fishing off of and around the dam and from the bank, with worms, dough bait and cut baits. **Flathead catfish** were stocked several years ago; there is some limited natural reproduction and flatheads up to 40+ pounds may be found. Try fishing with live bluegill, shad or cut bait off of and around the dam, and in the upper lake.

Good bank fishing can be found along the dam and on the north side of the lake. Anglers are reminded that in addition to a fishing permit, a city use permit is required to fish the lake. Permits can be purchased from numerous businesses in town. Remember to use proper handling techniques when releasing fish back to the water to ensure their survival.

### Driving Directions

Edwin A. Pape Lake is two miles south of Concordia on Highway 23, then west on Concordia Lake Road for about 0.5 mile in Lafayette County.

## Fellows Lake

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Muskellunge, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White

## Prospects

**Muskellunge** fishing at Fellows Lake should be good in 2025. Roughly 52% of muskie sampled in 2024 were greater than the minimum length limit of 36 inches with 18% being greater than 40 inches. Many of the muskie sampled were just below 36 inches and should begin exceeding the minimum length limit in the next few years. The largest muskie sampled was 47.5 inches long and weighed 31 pounds. Expect best muskie fishing success on overcast, rainy days during the fall or early spring months when water temperatures are below 70°F. Long-distance casting of large spinners, bucktails, or crankbaits and/or deep trolling near underwater structures such as river channels, humps, and points can be effective. Don't forget to use the "figure-eight" technique for extra action after retrieving your lure! In addition, muskies are often hooked while fishing for crappie, largemouth bass, or walleye at Fellows. Careful handling of both sub-legal and legal muskie at the water's surface will increase their chances for survival. Fishing for muskie during summer months, when water temperatures are warmer, will greatly decrease the survival odds for released muskie. For more information on muskie angling equipment, techniques, and handling methods please visit our website at [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov).

**Walleye** fishing should be in good in 2025. Thirty-two percent of the walleye captured in the spring 2024 survey were greater than 20 inches and several were greater than 25 inches. Walleye fishing can be challenging at Fellows, but fish can be caught targeting gravel points in the spring and the backs of coves in the summer using suspending jerk baits, crappie jigs, nightcrawlers, or minnows. Trolling deep-diving crankbaits across main lake points can also yield fish. The minimum length limit for walleye is 15 inches with a four fish daily bag limit at Fellows Lake.

**Largemouth bass** fishing should be good at Fellows Lake in 2025. A 12 to 15-inch protected slot length limit helps provide catch-and-release fishing opportunities. Forty-four percent of the largemouth bass sampled in 2024 were greater than 15 inches. Largemouth bass are usually found shallower during the spring spawn and during the fall. In the summertime, bass move offshore into deeper waters following schools of shad and other baitfish. The summer thermocline in Fellows Lake is generally between 15-17 feet, depending on lake level and

weather conditions, with few fish found below this depth.

**Crappie** fishing should remain fair in 2025. Both white crappie and black crappie are present in the lake, however black crappie made up roughly 95% of the population sampled in fall 2023. The black crappie in Fellows represent a high-density, slow-growing population. Nearly 45% of the black crappie sampled in 2023 were between 6 and 8 inches. Conversely, the white crappie in Fellows represent a low-density, fast-growing population with some fish reaching 15+ inches and 2 pounds. Minnows and tube jigs are the preferred baits for crappie anglers primarily in and around brush piles and other structures. Bank anglers often find success fishing off the causeway running over the eastern tip of the lake (N Farm Road 197). Fellows Lake has a 15 fish per day bag limit with no minimum length limit for crappie.

**Channel catfish** are stocked annually and can be found throughout the lake with several larger fish available for harvest. Preferred baits include chicken livers, nightcrawlers, prepared baits, and cut bait. **Bluegill** fishing will be fair in 2025 with most ranging from 4 to 6 inches. Small pieces of worms on a #6 to #10 size hook fished under a bobber make an excellent rig for beginning anglers. **Redear sunfish** are present as well and provide angler opportunities to pursue larger sunfish. In spring 2024 surveys, 60 percent of redear sunfish were greater than 7 inches and 36 percent were greater than 9 inches. Low densities of **spotted bass** and **flathead catfish** are also present in the lake.

Fellows Lake is managed under a Community Assistance Program (CAP) agreement with City Utilities of Springfield and has both a marina and bait shop run by the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. Motorboats, canoes, and kayaks are all available to rent. An ADA-accessible fishing dock is also present but does close during low lake levels. Be advised, Fellows Lake has a strict 40 horsepower limit on all motorboats and a boat permit is required, which can be purchased at the bait shop. For more information, please contact the Fellows Lake Bait Shop at 417-840-2965 or visit <https://watershedcommittee.org/fellows-lake>.

## Driving Directions

From Springfield, take Highway 65 north 4 miles, then Route AA west 0.5 mile, then Farm Road 197 north.

## Forest Lake - Thousand Hills State Park

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Crappie, White

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** are numerous; particularly those shorter than 12 inches, but anglers will continue to catch fair numbers of bass 15 inches or longer in 2024. In the last survey, 10 percent of the largemouth bass captured were 15 inches or longer, and two percent of those were 18 inches or longer. **White crappie** are plentiful, especially in the eight-ten-inch length range. Annually stocked **channel catfish** provide some of the best fishing in the Northeast Region for catfish in the one-three-pound range. **Walleye** fingerlings were stocked in fall of 2024, 2023 and 2021 as well as summer of 2020, and the survival of previous stockings has been good. A recent survey resulted in the capture of walleye in the 15-27-inch size range. In spring, anglers should concentrate on rocky points and the dam for spawning walleye. Later in the summer, walleye can be found on main-lake points. To facilitate bank angling, there is a barrier-free fishing dock located on the north shoreline off Big Loop Trail Road. There is a 90-horsepower limit on boat motors, and the City of Kirksville charges for a permit to operate private boats based on horsepower rating.

Anglers should be aware that curly-leaf pondweed, a non-native invasive aquatic plant, was discovered in 2016. By 2019, the plant had spread lake wide, encompassing most of the lake's shoreline. In spring 2022 the City of Kirksville started a multi-step removal effort with the use of biological control as well as chemical control. Boaters are encouraged to remove plants from their trailer, outboard motor, anchor, live well, and other components of the boat and trailer before leaving the lake. Clean the boat and gear with hot water or dry everything for at least five days to help prevent the spread of this aquatic invasive species.

### Driving Directions

Three and three-tenths miles west of Kirksville on Highway 6, then 2.7 miles south on Highway 157.

## Hamilton City Reservoir

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100

### Best Bets

Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)

### Prospects

Hamilton City Lake (90 acres) offers good potential for nice-sized **largemouth bass** and **hybrid striped bass** (white bass x striped bass). During recent electrofishing surveys fish over 20 inches were collected for both species. Unfortunately, the number of largemouth bass in the lake appears to be in decline with electrofishing catch rates trending down since 2016. Many earlier stockings of hybrid striped bass have now grown to harvestable sizes (>20 inches) while many fish from later stockings are smaller but surviving well.

Largemouth bass concentrate near shore to spawn in the early spring and then orient to submerged structure or deeper channels during other parts of the year. Obvious brush piles are limited in the lake so a boat equipped with a sonar unit is very helpful to find bass. Shore anglers should target fallen trees, overhanging brush, and edges of aquatic vegetation. Hybrid bass are often caught by casting and trolling in open water areas (where schools of shad occur) with larger jigs, spinners, crank baits, and other active lures that mimic baitfish.

Panfish species tend to be small in this lake but recent surveys showed some improvement with a few **white crappie** at more desirable sizes (9-12 inches). Bluegill remained small (less than 7 inches) due to competition for food with an extremely abundant population of gizzard shad.

### Driving Directions

From Hamilton, take Business Highway 36 west 1 mile, then NW Golf Course Drive north to lake.

## Happy Holler Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100

### Best Bets

Bluegill, Crappie, Black, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Happy Holler Lake, a 67-acre impoundment in Andrew County offers great potential for quality **bluegill**, **redeer sunfish**, and **crappie**, as well as a good opportunity for fast action for **largemouth bass**. Electrofishing catch-rates are very good for both size and numbers of largemouth bass. There are a lot of bass in the lake, and recent surveys show that 25 percent of the bass measured over 15 inches. Happy Holler lake gets very high fishing pressure, so anglers are only allowed to harvest two bass per day, and they must be over 18 inches. Quality-sized largemouth bass over 20 inches are also available. **Black crappie** have had great spawns in 2022 and 2023. Those year classes are steadily moving through the system, providing opportunities for crappie in the 8-10-inch range, with a few quality fish over 12 inches available. Anglers fishing for crappie should concentrate their efforts in the standing timber and over brush piles. Quality **bluegill** that average over 7 inches continue to be a large draw for anglers and will be found near any structure. Winter ice fishing for bluegill is extremely popular. Large **redeer sunfish** are plentiful, but sometimes difficult to catch. They will range in size from 7-11 inches, with many fish available over 9 inches. **Channel catfish** continue to be stocked and all sizes are readily caught off the banks and rock jetties and through the ice during winter months.

### Driving Directions

The area is composed of three tracts. Lake entrance: from Savannah, take Route E east 4 miles, then Route D north 6 miles to the parking lot. Refer to map for directions to tracts 2 and 3.

## Harrison County Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

Harrison County Reservoir (280 acres) consistently provides good-quality channel catfishing, some nice-sized crappie, and the occasional largemouth bass over 20 inches. The latest electrofishing surveys showed similar results to those observed in prior

surveys from 2015-2022. **Channel catfish** remain abundant thanks to continued stocking of catchable-sized catfish every two years at a rate of 10 fish per acre. Many of the channel catfish we surveyed were 15 to 24 inches long which make them ideal table fare. In recent years, a few larger **flathead catfish** and blue catfish have also been caught, although neither species is stocked by MDC. Our 2024 surveys showed flathead catfish are now reproducing naturally in the lake with increased numbers of small fish (8-11 inches) observed. Electrofishing catch rates for crappie in recent years have shown a downward trend, suggesting lower abundance, but some nice-sized **white crappie** (up to 12.5 inches) and **black crappie** (up to 17 inches) were observed in 2024. Survey results also suggest declining abundance for **largemouth bass** and yet most bass (57%) were above the minimum size for harvesting (15 inches) with 16 percent larger than 18 inches.

The fish population continues to adjust to the establishment of **gizzard shad** (source unknown) which were first reported in 2015. Electrofishing surveys in recent years have shown a general trend towards fewer largemouth bass, and fewer and smaller (slow growing) panfish species such as **bluegill**. Average catch rates for largemouth bass and bluegill in our surveys from 2016-2024 were about half of the average catch rates prior to the introduction of gizzard shad. Unfortunately, sizes of bluegill have declined from the nice-sized 8+ inches to very few over 6 inches.

The presence of gizzard shad in the lake has definitely changed the fishery. Gizzard shad populations typically fluctuate greatly from year-to-year, depending on weather patterns, which can result in positive or negative impacts to the fishery. Some years there may be high numbers of juvenile shad produced throughout the summer and this provides abundant forage for species like crappie and bass. Other years, shad spawning conditions may be short-lived or poor and small forage is then limited. Gizzard shad also consume large amounts of plankton which are important food sources for juvenile fish, especially panfish (bluegill and crappie). The result can be slower growth rates for young or small sportfish.

Fishing during the spring spawning periods should remain like past years, but post-spawn angling may need some new approaches at times. Some species may adjust their feeding activities with changes in the shad population and respond to lures that imitate

shad. Other fish will continue to use the various brush piles submerged around the lake, shallow vegetation, and bite on jigs, prepared and natural baits. Keep trying different approaches until you find what works!

Water conditions in Harrison County Lake vary from very turbid (muddy) during exceptionally wet periods, to moderately clear during drier times when runoff in the watershed is minimal. Higher nutrient levels promote good fish growth, but occasionally create algal blooms which become intense at times.

### Driving Directions

Travel 9 miles north of the city of Bethany on County Road W. Turn west on W 222nd St (gravel) for about 0.5 mile to the main lake entrance.

## Hazel Creek Lake

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

### Best Bets

Muskellunge, Largemouth Bass, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

The **largemouth bass** population continues to improve at 530-acre Hazel Creek Lake located just north of Kirksville. Anglers that routinely fish Hazel Creek Lake know that it has the potential to produce trophy bass. According to a spring 2024 survey, 26 percent of the bass captured were 15 inches or longer, and one in ten was 18 inches or longer! Due to the absence of suitable aquatic vegetation, anglers should target bass near woody cover in spring and timbered creek channels in the summer. The **white crappie** population has improved in response to the enhanced bass population. Results from a fall 2019 survey indicated that 42 percent of the white crappie captured were 9 inches or longer. If anglers can locate **black crappie** the potential for trophies exist.

**Muskie** fishing in 2025 is predicted to be excellent with the possibility of one in three fish measuring 36 inches or longer. September and October are great months to target feeding muskie. Best bets are to use a white or silver color pattern to mimic shad or crappie. To safely release these large, toothy predators at boat side, anglers should keep a floating ruler, needle-nose pliers, hook cutter, and leather gloves nearby. Anglers who wish to assist first-hand with muskie management in Missouri are encouraged to participate in the Show-Me Muskie Project, a

volunteer angler diary program. Anglers can find out more about the Show-Me Muskie Project and muskie fishing information by visiting the Missouri Department of Conservation Web page at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zob>. New in 2023 will be the start of a mark-recapture project on muskie. Anglers are encouraged to assist. Interested anglers can reach out to management biologist DJ Loken to obtain tag readers. **Channel catfish** in the 2-4-pound range are available, but not in substantial numbers. **Blue catfish** were last stocked in 1990 and can be caught in spring using dead shad as bait. A popular place to fish for blue catfish among local anglers is off the causeway at the south end of the lake. Bow fishing for **common carp** and **grass carp** is highly encouraged and can be very exciting throughout the spring and summer months.

### Driving Directions

Three and two-tenths miles north of Kirksville on Highway 63, then 1.5 miles west on Buck Creek Road.

## Hazel Hill Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Crappie, Black, Redear Sunfish, Bluegill, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be good for both legal (greater-than 15-inches) and sublegal (less-than 15-inches) fish. The larger bass are in good condition. Fishing

for **bluegill** and **redeer sunfish** should continue to be good. Most bluegill will be 6 to 8-inches, and there will be some redear sunfish greater than 9-inches. Fishing shoreline areas and coves during April and May with small spinners and small crankbaits, such as artificial crayfish, is a productive method to catch both bass and sunfish. Once shallow waters become warm in June and July, anglers may be more successful using worms and slip bobbers around flooded trees.

Fishing for **crappie** is good during April and May using minnows and jigs, and fishing can also be good during the fall. Anglers should expect to catch a lot of

7 to 9-inch crappie with some larger crappie caught in the spring. Anglers are encouraged to harvest all sizes of crappie up to their daily limit of 30. Each year **Channel catfish** are stocked in the fall and fishing for catfish is good. Catfish anglers should try using stink baits or chicken livers, and fishing from shore or along the dam in the evening.

Only pole and line fishing is allowed on Hazel Hill Lake. Outboard motors larger than 10 horsepower may be used, but are required to be operated at no wake speed.

### Driving Directions

Five miles northwest of Warrensburg on Highway 13, go three miles west on Route OO. Hazel Hill Lake is a 71-acre lake with a disabled accessible fishing dock, parking lot, and privy located in Johnson County.

## Higginsville City Lake

(Kansas City Region)

Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be good for both legal (greater-than 15 inches) fish and sublegal (less-than 15 inches) fish. The bass population is one of low density, yet high quality. Anglers report catching good numbers of all sizes of bass up to 20+ inches in length. Try fishing with spinnerbaits, crankbaits and plastic worms off of points and near structure. Fishing for **bluegill** should be fair with fish up to 6 inches in length. Try fishing off of the bank with worms. **Crappie** fishing should also be fair. The crappie population is stunted and there are numerous small, slow growing crappie along with some larger ones. Anglers should expect to catch a lot of 6 to 8-inch crappie and are encouraged to harvest all sizes of crappie caught up to their daily limit of 30. Try fishing the west shore from below the spillway of the upper lake to the pier and around the point with jigs and/or minnows especially during April and May.

Catfishing should continue to be good during the summer; please note that pole and line fishing is the only legal method to catch catfish. Each year

1,500 **channel catfish** (8-12 inches) are stocked in the fall. There are good numbers of all sizes of channel catfish with some over 5 pounds! Try fishing below the spillway and dam of the upper lake (by boat or bank), off the pier or dock, and along the banks, with worms, dough bait, and cut baits. **Flathead catfish** were stocked several years ago, there is some limited natural reproduction and flatheads up to 40 + pounds! Try fishing with live bluegill, green sunfish, shad, and cut bait below the spillway of the upper lake (by boat or bank), along the west shore to the pier and down by the dam on the south side of the lake.

Good bank fishing can be found along all of the entrance roads around the lake. Anglers are reminded that in addition to a fishing permit, a city use permit is required to fish the lake. Permits can be purchased from numerous businesses in town. Remember to use proper handling techniques when releasing fish back to the water to ensure their survival.

### Driving Directions

Higginsville City Lake is 2.4 miles east on Route AA from the intersection of Business Highway 13 and Route AA in Higginsville. Turn south onto Airport Road.

## Hunnewell Lake

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

### Best Bets

Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should be fair in 2025. Results from the 2023 spring electrofishing survey indicated a 25 percent decrease in the overall catch rate compared to 2021. Anglers struggled capturing bass over 15 inches in 2024. Anglers are strongly encouraged to harvest bass up to their daily limit of six bass less than 12 inches long to continue to improve the size structure of the population. **Bluegill** fishing should be fair, with a slight improvement of bluegill greater than 8 inches, when compared to 2021. Anglers in 2024 reported decent catches of bluegill 8 to 9 inches. **Redear sunfish** will be fair compared to previous years, with a majority being 7 inches or less. **Black crappie** are also abundant but will average 8 to 9 inches in length. **Catfish** angling (both channels and blues)

will continue to be good. In 2024, **blue catfish** exceeding 40 pounds were caught in the lake by rod-and-reel with a balloon rig. Hunnewell Lake serves as the water supply for the Hunnewell Hatchery. Several regulations are in place to reduce the chances of an accidental introduction of invasive species, such as zebra mussels. To protect Hunnewell Hatchery, private boats and bait transported or held in containers with water are prohibited. Boats and oars are provided free of charge on a first come, first served basis. Anglers are allowed to use electric trolling motors on MDC boats. Anglers must supply their own Coast Guard-approved personal floatation (life jackets).

### Driving Directions

From highway 36 at Hunnewell, three miles north on highway Z.

## Indian Creek Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Crappie, Black, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

A great deal of habitat work has happened in this 192-acre lake in the last few years. Many cedar, oak and locust brush piles have been strategically placed in 8 feet of water or less and water lilies have been planted for additional habitat diversity. **Bluegill** and **redeer sunfish** fishing is good around these brush piles and near lake points. Bluegill grow to 7.5-8" in length, and redear reach 8-10" regularly in this lake. There are good numbers of **largemouth bass** in the 12-15" protected slot and from 15-18" in length. Anglers are encouraged to keep the fish they catch that are below slot length. While **black crappie** numbers are lower than in some nearby lakes, sizes are excellent with some fish reaching 12-15". A concrete boat ramp, privy, and covered fishing dock are located on the southeast cove. Vegetation can be thick in April-June, so plan your trip accordingly.

### Driving Directions

From Chillicothe, travel west five miles on Highway 190 to Route A. Travel five miles north to the Route W junction. Continue on Route A, one mile west to the area entrance. Turn left on the gravel road and follow it to the boat ramp.

## James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White, Redear Sunfish, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Bluegill

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** begin spawning in late April and will continue until late May-early June. Fish brush piles and off of points using a rig with a plastic worm or a jig and pig. Following the spawn in the summer months as water temperatures climb, fish early and late in the day using topwater baits. Work these baits along lily pads, pondweed, or brush piles and hold on for that topwater bite. During the day, fish under shade trees. All of the lakes on the Reed Area hold great bass populations, and catches of 5+ lb fish are not uncommon. Bluestem, Catclaw, Cottontail, Jackrabbit, Plover, and Nell contain the highest performing bass populations.

**Channel catfish** action stays consistent throughout most of the summer. All lakes are stocked annually and hold good populations. During the spring rains, fish the creek channels running into the lakes by drifting a nightcrawler. Chicken liver and cut shad are the best summertime baits. After the water reaches 80 degrees, float these baits under a bobber. In the late winter and early spring, fish stinky baits to get an early start catfishing.

**Bluegill** and **redeer sunfish** will spawn in all lakes starting in late April and will run until early June. The top lakes for bluegill are Gopher and Catclaw, l. Try fishing the coves with red worms or crickets under a bobber. For redear sunfish, target Bluestem, Bodarc, and Plover. Try fishing on the bottom near cover or using a small tube jig tipped with a little piece of worm fished along the bottom.

**Crappie** fishing takes off in early April until mid-May. Try fishing Bluestem, Bodarc, Cottontail, Nell, or Catclaw lakes for the best populations of crappie on the area. Crappie spawn on the rocky banks and near woody cover, so use minnows or jigs tipped with power bait fished under a bobber near these areas. Fishing will also pick up again in the fall as water temperatures drop to near 50 degrees. Fish on flats with a bobber and minnow to get your limit. Anglers are encouraged to harvest their daily limit of crappie to reduce crowding on all lakes; 2024 fall trapnetting surveys revealed an abundant age-class in Gopher, Coot, and Catclaw. Anglers are encouraged to fill their daily harvest limit of 30 crappie to help reduce population densities.

**Hybrid striped bass** are stocked in all lakes on the area, except Honker, and offer a different predator for anglers to pursue. Chicken liver is a good bet to hook into a wiper on the Reed Area lakes. During the early season (March-April), crankbaits are a safe bet as fish begin to put the feed bag on for the year. During the summer, be mindful of shad balls popping on the surface as wipers will often chase these to catch a quick meal. Throw crankbaits or soft plastics into the frenzy and hope for a bite.

In November, **rainbow trout** are stocked into Coot, Plover, and Honker Pond (kid's fishing only, 15 years old and younger) and will be stocked through March to establish a winter fishing season. Try using prepared trout baits, small crankbaits, small jigs, and flies to catch trout. All anglers including children must have a trout permit to harvest trout.

Need help learning how to fish? The Reed Area holds many Discover Nature Fishing classes. Check out the following web site for all the classes held at the Reed Area and across the state:

<http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZkB>.

## Driving Directions

One mile east of Lee's Summit on Highway 50, exit onto Ranson Road turn to the south and entrance is 1/2 mile on your left.

## Kansas City Urban Fishing Lakes

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

Thirteen Kansas City metro lakes including nine in KC Parks (Englewood, Troost, North Terrace, Chaumiere, Lake of the Woods, Lakewood, Migliazzo, Blue Valley, Penn Valley and Jerry Smith), one in Liberty Parks (Capital Federal Sports Complex), one in Raymore Parks (Johnston Lake), and one in Belton Parks (Cleveland Lake) will be stocked with **channel catfish** (one-pound average). Stockings will take place throughout the summer (April through September). Anglers should note the daily limit is 4 catfish in the aggregate. Anglers should try using baits such as nightcrawlers, stinkbaits, and cut bait to catch catfish. Anglers are successful fishing these baits on the bottom in the spring and fall, or under a bobber in the hot summer months.

**Hybrid sunfish** (six-inch average) will be stocked in Troost, Lake of the Woods, Lakewood (Kansas City Parks), and Capital Federal Sports Complex (Liberty Parks) in the summer (April-September). Anglers should try using baits such as nightcrawlers, crickets, meal worms, and red wigglers on small hooks under a bobber. Larger baits such as nightcrawlers can be cut to smaller pieces so fit on the hook better. Sunfish like to have structure or cover around them but can be caught in open water as well., especially in the summer months.

In addition to the catfish and hybrid sunfish stockings, **rainbow trout** (3/4 pound average) will be stocked several times during winter months (November thru March) at Capitol Federal Sports Complex (Liberty Parks), Cleveland Lake (Belton Parks), Johnston Lake (Raymore Parks), Chaumiere (Kansas City Parks) Lake, and Jesse James Park Lake (Kearney Parks). At all the lakes, trout may be harvested immediately after stocking and a trout permit is required to possess trout. Trout can be caught on live and prepared baits, worms, minnows, small jigs, spinnerbaits, and flies. Maps showing the locations of stocked lakes are available at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zp7](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zp7). For the latest stocking updates use the Stocking Hotline (816-525-0300). Information on when fish are stocked will only be provided through the hotline. The hotline is updated immediately after the fish are all stocked.

## Lake Jacomo

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Crappie, White, White Bass, Walleye, Flathead Catfish, Bluegill

### Prospects

Lake Jacomo continues to produce good **largemouth bass** and is one of the best bass lakes in the Kansas City area. Largemouth bass can be found along the outer edge of water willow and vegetation edges all spring and summer. Beaver lodges and logs are also great spots year-round. When water temperatures are in the 70's chatterbaits, topwater and spinner baits can yield rod shaking strikes. As water temperatures warm in the summer, fishing deeper with slow moving baits can be very effective. **Channel catfish** are common with good numbers over 15 inches in length and many in the 10 to 15-pound range. Channel catfish are maintained through annual stockings and the population is robust with quality fish available. Channel catfish are readily caught on a variety of baits from shore or boat. They will concentrate in the backs of coves when water is flowing into the lake after a good rain. The portion of the lake near the south marina, especially the old swim beach, and the west bank between the north marina and the dam are excellent choices for channel catfish. The lake also supports a good number of **flathead catfish** with many of these fish exceeding 20 pounds. Fish for flatheads using live bait and concentrate near deep, rocky structure and creek channels in the late spring and early summer. Beaver lodges and large lay down trees also will hold a big flathead from time to time.

The **black** and **white crappie** populations have been fairly consistent in recent years, and should still be good in 2023. Anglers should continue to have good success off the north marina boat dock and the three disabled-accessible docks over deep water during the fall and winter. Brush piles have been placed in the lake as well to give boat anglers good targets for crappie most of the year. Lake Jacomo is stocked annually with **walleye** and has many walleye over 17 inches. Fishing after dark along the spillway in late March and early April can be productive. Crankbaits that make some noise are most effective as the spawning fish are most often caught on reactive strikes, not feeding strikes. During summer and early fall, fish the flats and points. The rocky bluffs along Liggett Cove and the shallow water on the south side

of Sailboat Cove have also produced some nice walleye.

The **white bass** fishery in Lake Jacomo is good and underutilized. White bass from 12 to 15 inches are fairly common and are often caught while fishing for crappie or walleye. A unique feature of the white bass fishery in Jacomo is how the white bass concentrate along the dam in mid-April and should strike crankbaits or topwater lures at this time. White bass can be difficult to locate in Jacomo in the summer and fall. Schooling white bass can sometimes be seen on windy points. Anglers often locate white bass by trolling shad-colored crank baits. Once located, casting to the school can provide fast action. **Bluegill** were once Lake Jacomo's claim to fame and we have seen improvement the last few years. Bluegill over 8 inches in length were reported recently. Popping bugs with a fly rod or an ultralight rod with crickets can provide some exciting action on a summer's evening. The clear water can make it difficult to fish bluegill with an ultralight in shallow spawning areas. A fly rod with a small nymph can be very effective. Concentrate on shallow areas in the backs of coves in May to find nesting fish. Beaver lodges can be a great place to find bluegill all year-round. Brush pile locations and their depths are available on our interactive map online or the free MO Fishing app.

Zebra mussels were discovered in Lake Jacomo in 2017 and Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curly-leaf Pondweed has become established in the last couple years as well. Please make sure you clean, drain and dry your boat and trailer before taking it to another lake.

### Driving Directions

From Highway 291/I-470 go east on Woods Chapel Road 1.5 miles.

### Lake Paho

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Lake Paho (273 acres) offers fishing, camping (no hookups), and a peaceful natural setting for those

wanting to relax in the outdoors. Anglers have long recognized the lake for quality-sized **largemouth bass**, but recent surveys show a trend towards more but smaller bass. Electrofishing surveys from 2017-2024 showed a significant increase in catch rates for bass, much of that due to bass from 6-12 inches and an increase in the amount of aquatic vegetation. In 2024, several bass in our surveys were in the 15-18" range but a few fish around 20 inches were observed as well. **White crappie** numbers and sizes in our 2021 trap net surveys show five percent of crappie reach 10" or larger. Characteristically, crappie are located close to shore following a period of stable weather in the spring, then concentrated near submerged brush and in culverts as the seasons progress. Crappie also tend to suspend over deeper channels and feed on juvenile shad during the summer, so drifting or trolling those areas often yield success. **Channel catfish** are not effectively collected in our electrofishing surveys, but they are stocked every two years and anglers report good catch rates for fish from 14-22 inches, plus the occasional "big fish". Natural baits (worms, liver, dead shad) and stinkbaits are the most popular choices for catfishing. In recent years, aquatic vegetation has re-established in the shallows, providing enhanced spawning and rearing habitat for bass as well as panfish species. Coontail was especially abundant during the last few summers, and it has made access challenging for many anglers. Coontail is a native species which forms dense mats in the shallows during summer and fall. New brushpiles were added in 2023 around the jetty, west shoreline, and southeast arm of the lake.

### Driving Directions

Four miles west of Princeton on Highway 136. North of Highway 136 on Fathom Street.

## Lake Remembrance

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

This is a 54-acre lake and anglers will find an expansive paved parking lot on the dam, along with good fishing for a variety of species. Anglers can carry in small johnboats with electric motors, canoes, and kayaks, however; the use of belly boats or wading along the shoreline is not allowed by the City of Blue Springs. An all-weather trail provides access to the entire shoreline and a disabled accessible dock along the east shoreline was constructed by the City of Blue Springs in conjunction with MDC. A small parking lot with a trail to the upper end of the lake can be accessed from Duncan Road on the north side of the lake.

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be fair for both legal (greater-than 15-inches) and sublegal (less-than 15-inches) fish. Previous sampling shows a low density bass population. Try fishing with spinnerbaits, crankbaits, and soft plastics around timber, emergent vegetation, and submerged weed edges should result in some success for bass anglers.

Lake Remembrance typically provides plenty for panfish. **Bluegill** fishing should be good with fish up to 7-inches in length. These fish have excellent body condition which will make them ready and able to bend a rod. Try fishing areas near vegetation such as the water lily beds along the east shoreline. Be sure to bring nightcrawlers or crickets to ensure plenty of bites. Small jigs and spinnerbaits also work well if you prefer artificial baits. **Redear sunfish** are not as common as the bluegill, yet they are nice-sized. Previous sampling shows several fish greater than 8 inches. To catch redear sunfish, fish the bottom near cover and try using a small jig tipped with a little piece of worm fished along the bottom.

Finally, **channel catfish** add another dimension to this fishery. Yearly stockings of 8 to 12-inch channel catfish should provide good year-round fishing. Catfish anglers should try stinkbaits, chicken liver, or fresh cut baits and fish from the jetties and the dam.

### Driving Directions

From I-70 east of Blue Springs, take the Adams Dairy Parkway exit north to the frontage road (NE Jefferson Street), and turn east to the lake.

## Lake Showme

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420



Handicap Accessible

**Best Bets**

Crappie, Black, Walleye, Largemouth Bass, Redear Sunfish, Bluegill

**Prospects**

This 225-acre lake in Scotland County should provide excellent fishing for multiple species. **Largemouth bass** abundance was high during the most recent spring sampling, and the size structure had increased since 2018, with 36 percent of the bass sampled measuring at least 15 inches long. Panfish angling should continue to be excellent. Anglers should expect to catch a high percentage of **bluegill** seven inches and longer. Although not as numerous, the odds of catching a **redeer sunfish** seven inches or longer while fishing for bluegill are good with the largest observed redear sunfish from the most recent spring electrofishing being nearly 12 inches in length. **Crappie** anglers frequently harvest large numbers of 9-11-inch fish from the barrier free fishing dock. Weed lines in any cove are a great spot to target crappie on those hot summer days. **Walleye** continue to provide a quality angling experience in this northeast Missouri lake. The 2024 electrofishing catch rate for walleye was down again from 2023, but 100 percent of the walleye sampled during electrofishing were 15 inches or longer and well over half of the walleye sampled were over 20 inches long. The consistent stockings in recent years means that angling should be good for years to come. Anglers have been reporting several walleye caught over 25-inches. There is an 18-inch minimum length limit for walleye and only 4 walleye may be kept per day. This is one of the best walleye opportunities in Northeast Missouri. Boaters are reminded that outboard motors in excess of 10 horsepower are allowed but must be operated at slow, no-wake speed.

**Driving Directions**

Lake Showme is two miles west of Memphis on Highway 136, then one mile south on Lake Showme Drive (gravel).

**Lawson City Lake**

(Northwest Region)

**Information**

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

**Best Bets**

Bluegill, Channel Catfish

**Prospects**

Popular fish species in this 25-acre lake include largemouth bass, channel catfish, white crappie, and bluegill. Electrofishing surveys in 2024 showed good numbers of **largemouth bass** with most fish 8 -15 inches long. **Bluegill** sizes were good with 70 percent from 7-8 inches long. The crappie population continues to offer fast fishing during the spring spawn with a nice variety of black and white crappie in the 9-10" range. There are ample brush piles throughout the lake to help congregate fish, improve catch rates, and are within easy casting distance from shore. **Channel catfish** are also very numerous and are stocked in the lake every two years.

Lawson City Lake is a great place to spend the day, or a few days. The city recently completed development of a campground and RV park next to the lake with 21 sites able to be reserved, and some with hook-ups for electricity, water and sewer. The lake complex also includes a walking trail that encircles the lake and 18-hole disc golf course. Fishing amenities include a new parking lot, new restroom facilities, new fishing jetty and a spacious covered fishing dock. The city keeps much of the shoreline mowed and maintains a paved walking trail that make it easy to take a kid fishing or find your own comfortable space.

**Limpp Lake**

(Northwest Region)

**Information**

816-271-3100

**Best Bets**

Largemouth Bass, Common Carp, Channel Catfish, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)

**Prospects**

This small lake was built in the 1960s and offers a concrete boat ramp, ADA accessible privy, and grass trail around the lake. Over the years, the lake has received higher rates of siltation from surrounding agricultural land in its watershed. Despite shallow depths in the upper arms, the main body of the lake maintains adequate depths and offers good fishing for channel catfish and largemouth bass. **Channel**

**catfish** are stocked regularly and offer consistent catch rates for fish from 16"-24". Surveys in 2023 and 2024 showed catch rates for largemouth bass were higher than observed in recent years but many bass remained relatively large with 42% of fish greater than fifteen inches and 19% larger than eighteen inches. The bass were closely associated with flooded vegetation along the dam and with brush piles. Limpp also contains nuisance fish including **gizzard shad** and **common carp**; both species generally suppress growth of panfish (**bluegill** and **white crappie**). Bluegill sizes are generally too small for anglers. On the good side, the abundance of common carp offers a great opportunity for anglers and bowfishers to enjoy the impressive fighting qualities of this introduced species. **Hybrid striped bass** are also stocked annually, offering an excellent opportunity to catch this excellent fighting fish and keep a few (4) over 20". New brushpiles were added in 2023. Only electric motors are permitted.

### Driving Directions

One mile west of King City on Highway 48, and 0.5 mile north on Route CC. Limpp Lake (29 acres) is located on a 70-acre conservation area in Gentry County.

## Little Compton Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Crappie, White, Channel Catfish, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)

### Prospects

This 40-acre lake sets close to the Grand River and has been reconnected to the river during flood events in the past. Anglers can catch a wide variety of lake and river species here. **White crappie** are abundant in the lake with 83% of spawning fish this year reaching sizes greater than 10". Several factors have worked in unison to increase crappie size at Little Compton Lake, including **hybrid striped bass** stockings, increasing **largemouth bass** numbers, several new brushpile installations, and increasing fishing pressure. Crappie should be targeted around brush piles off the tips of jetties,

and **channel catfish** should be targeted in the shallow flats. Hybrid striped bass are now regularly stocked here and are reaching the 20-inch minimum length limit. There is a concrete boat ramp and a privy on the east side of the lake.

### Driving Directions

From Hale, MO. take hwy 139 south approximately 3.7 mi. turn left (east) on County Road 214 and take it to the lake entrance (Approximately 3.5 mi).

## Little Dixie Lake

(Central Region)



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Blue Catfish, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should be great in 2025 based on recent surveys. There should be good numbers of bass in the 10-11-inch range available to anglers. A number of bass in the 12-15-inch protected slot length range providing some excellent catch and release fishing. Bass over 18 inches (3 lbs. or larger) are common, including a few around 22-24 inches (6 lbs.). Anglers can help improve the density of larger bass by practicing catch-and-release fishing for those bass greater than 15 inches. The rock jetties on the east and west side of the lake, including a disabled-accessible paved jetty, as well as the numerous sunken brush piles around the shoreline of the lake (mostly in the southern half of the lake) usually provide the best fishing. Fishing around structures like creek channel drop-offs and fallen trees are also very productive. Fishing just past the vegetation (water willow) off the rock jetties in the springtime should be productive. **Bluegill** fishing will be fair this year. There are many bluegill in the lake, but most fish will average 5-8 inches. Most of the crappie in the lake are small (7-9 inches), with an occasional 12-14 inch crappie found. Each October, MDC stocks around 2,000 **channel catfish** and around 500 **blue catfish** into the lake. While the lake does get a lot of catfish harvest from anglers, with the steady stocking the population is steady and should continue to be over the next few years. We continue to receive reports of 30+ pound blue catfish caught by anglers. Most of the 18-22-inch catfish caught by anglers last year were taken during the spring and early summer months, though large blue catfish were caught all summer. Fishing off the jetties and dam, around

cover, and near creek channels is the most productive. Good catfish baits include worms, liver, shrimp, cut shad, prepared baits, and live sunfish. Anglers are encouraged to identify their catch and report blue catfish catch to the Columbia MDC office (573-815-7901 ext. 2874).

**Redear sunfish** fishing should be good, according to surveys conducted in Spring 2024. As in previous years, anglers will have the opportunity to catch large numbers of 8-11-inch redear. Chances of catching a 10-inch redear sunfish (Master Angler Award size) are good. Try fishing near woody cover and tree stumps in shallow water, especially in May and early June during spawning. Worms and crickets fished on or near the bottom work well. There is also an overabundance of **common carp** in Little Dixie Lake. Common carp not only compete with more desirable game species but decrease water quality as well. Anglers can assist with the eradication of common carp by not returning them to the water alive. Little Dixie Lake is also home to a few large **lake sturgeon**. Lake sturgeon are an endangered species and are protected by law. Any angler catching a lake sturgeon must release it unharmed, immediately after being caught. Check Missouri's Fishing Regulation summary booklet on how to identify sturgeon. When in doubt about the identity or legal length of any fish, play it safe and return the fish to the water unharmed immediately.

### Driving Directions

On I-70 ten miles west of Kingdom City, take the Route J exit and go south to Route RA. The main Little Dixie Lake CA parking area is off Route RA near the junction with Route J in Millersburg. An additional parking lot, including disabled access, can be reached by traveling west on RA, which turns into County Road 228. Turn north onto County Road 226. Follow the signs to Little Dixie Lake.

## Longview Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Channel Catfish, White Bass, Flathead Catfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** numbers continue to improve. During electrofishing surveys in 2023, 50% of bass measured 15 inches or greater. Anglers should concentrate on the edges of vegetation in the cooler months and deeper woody cover during the summer for best results. The shallower the fish, the faster and more aggressive the lure type you should use. Spinner baits, topwater and shallow running crankbaits can be fished quickly and induce aggressive strikes in the spring. **Channel catfish** numbers remain high, with an average size just over a pound, but fish over 20 inches are available as well. Nightcrawlers and prepared bait fished on shallow flats works well for channel cats. The high densities of channel catfish will provide plenty of good summer fishing. Anglers are encouraged to harvest their daily limit of 10 channel catfish.

During spring electrofishing surveys in 2024, 89% of **walleye** measured over 15 inches in length. The best time and place for anglers to catch these fish is in late March and April along the dam and the rocky east side of the lake when the fish move in to spawn. Walleye will feed heavily on the flats prior to spawning in late March and can be found on these same shallow points during windy, overcast summer days. Walleye can also be caught by trolling crankbaits and bottom bouncers with crawler harnesses during the summer months over underwater humps and along main lake points. Flats near a channel can be especially productive. Ripple shads and spinnerbaits near weed lines, as well as jigging along the edge of deep timber can be effective in the summer.

**Crappie** fishing may be more difficult in 2024. Sampling data revealed fewer quality size crappie than normal, and most crappie are 8-10 inches. Nice crappie are still available though. Anglers should concentrate fishing efforts near rock banks and banks with fallen logs when the crappie are spawning in the spring. During summer and fall, anglers should fish around standing timber next to creek channels or submerged brush piles. Brush pile locations are available online in our interactive map and through our free MO Fishing app.

**Common carp**, while an undesirable component of the fishery, can provide abundant fishing opportunities at Longview Lake. Try 'chumming' the water with a can of corn and use small single hooks with small chunks of dough bait in the backs of coves and shallow areas starting in the late May. Fly fisherman can enjoy carp fishing when they are in the shallows from May through late summer. **White**

**bass** are abundant and can often be caught by fishing windblown banks or points in summer and early fall. Try fishing with jigs, spoons, or any bait that imitates shad for best results. Trolling can be a good way to locate white bass, but schooling fish on windy points can be seen feeding on shad at the surface. When surface feeding white bass will take almost any lure, but a 3" swim shad is always a good choice. **Flathead catfish** are growing very well in Longview Lake. Sampling has shown natural reproduction is occurring with all sizes of fish found including some over 50 pounds. Flathead catfish prefer live baits and are found in rocky areas or areas with lots of brush. Fishing is limited to rod and reel only at Longview Lake.

To increase available habitat, brushpiles were introduced in the spring of 2024 on the East side of the lake. GPS points for brushpiles can be found on [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

Zebra mussels were also discovered in Longview Lake in the summer of 2024. Boaters, be sure to follow standard procedures when launching boats. Drain livewells before and after using Longview Lake to stop the spread of this invasive species. More information can be found on [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

### Driving Directions

Take Raytown Road south of I-470 to Longview Road. Turn east on Longview Road and follow it to the boat ramp and marina.

## Manito Lake

(Central Region)

### Information

573-815-7900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish, Grass Carp

### Prospects

**Bluegill** fishing should be good again in 2025 due to many fish in the 6–8-inch size range and some 9+ inches that were also sampled in the spring of 2024. Fishing for **largemouth bass** will be fair; the size structure of the bass population has stayed about the same as the last few years. Spring 2024 sampling showed lots of bass in the 9–13-inch size range and no bass above the slot length limit in the 15 inch and above size range. Fishing for bass and Bluegill

around the aquatic vegetation in the upper end and west arm of the lake should be productive. Manito Lake also has a small population of **redeer sunfish** with some fish available in the 10 to 11+ inch size range for those anglers willing to search for trophy-sized fish. There is also an opportunity to catch **crappie**, however the population is small. This lake is open to bowfishing for nongame fish species. Bowfishing opportunities for **grass carp** should be good in the upper end and west arm of the lake. Manito Lake has well established colonies of spatterdock growing in the upper arm and west arm of the lake that should provide some good shallow water bass fishing. Around 800 **channel catfish** were stocked in Fall 2024, the same amount as in previous years.

### Driving Directions

From Tipton, MO take Highway 5 South to Manito Lake Road near Fortuna.

## Maple Leaf Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be good for both legal (greater-than 15-inches) and sublegal (less-than 15-inches) fish. Maple Leaf produces high densities of forage for largemouth bass and anglers report catching bass in the 3-5 pound size range. Fishing crankbaits and buzzbaits along the weed beds and plastic worms around the standing trees are good strategies for bass anglers.

**Bluegill** fishing will be fair with most bluegill smaller than 6 inches in

length. **Redear sunfish** fishing will be good. To catch redear sunfish, try using a small jig tipped with a little piece of worm fished along the bottom. Sunfish anglers should concentrate along the shoreline during April and May, and then move to standing trees in deeper water during June and July. Anglers may be more successful using worms and slip bobbers around flooded trees.

**Crappie** fishing will be fair due to the low density of fish. A considerable number of crappie caught by

anglers can exceed 9 inches. Anglers may catch crappie on the banks during April and will have to target areas around submerged trees later in the season. Tube jigs and minnows are good crappie baits. Crappie angling can also be very good during September and October using minnows around submerged trees. **Channel catfish** fishing is good. Catfish anglers should try using stink baits or chicken livers, and fishing from the jetties or the dam in the evening.

### Driving Directions

From the junction of Highway 13 and I-70, go three miles west on the South I-70 Outer Access Road.

## Marceline City Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

660-646-6122

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Crappie, Black, Largemouth Bass

### Prospects

This 176 acre lake has limited bank fishing but what is available is very good. **Largemouth bass** fishing is excellent. A 12- to 15-inch protected slot length limit continues to improve the bass population. Bass anglers can expect the majority of their catch to be fish 12 to 15 inches long. However, catches of large bass are increasing. 2024 sampling data showed that almost 40% of the largemouth bass were between 12- to 15-inches with the rest being above or below the slot. A high quality **channel catfish** population exists in the lake with several fish longer than 20 inches. Anglers should use night crawlers or prepared baits fished off the bottom. During the summer, be sure to fish in water less than 12 feet deep. Oxygen levels in many Missouri lakes get too low to support fish at depths below 12 feet. Anglers interested in panfishing will find good numbers of **bluegill** with 2024 sampling data revealing that most of them are between 6- to 8- inches in length. At times, **crappie** anglers can experience great catches with most crappie being over 10 inches, however they can be difficult to track down at times. The 2024 sampling data did not reveal high catches but of the ones that were sampled 50% were over 10-inches. This lake has lotus in it that comes on in July so if you are planning on bank fishing I suggest you do it early in the year before the lotus begins to grow. This area offers a concrete boat ramp, ADA fishing dock with fish cleaning station, ADA courtesy boat dock,

ADA privy, ADA parking, and plenty of truck and trailer parking in a gravel parking lot.

### Driving Directions

Take Highway 5 south of Marceline to county highway E and go west approximately 3 miles to county road Marceline Lake Ave (Gravel road). Travel north approximately 3/4 of a mile to the lake entrance on the east side of the road.

## Nodaway County Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Crappie, White

### Prospects

This 73-acre lake in Nodaway County is located just a few miles north of Maryville, and should provide some decent largemouth bass fishing in 2024. Electrofishing surveys during 2024 on Nodaway County Lake showed that the largemouth bass population is improving. Spinnerbaits, topwater baits, shad-imitating crankbaits, and crawfish plastics all work well. **Bluegill** and **crappie** size structure is greatly improving. Anglers will find **bluegill** up to 8 inches near the fishing jetty or on brush piles. Fishing with small plastics and jig and minnow combinations over the newly installed brush piles, or off the fishing jetty, will produce plenty of **black crappie** and **white crappie**, with some fish up to 15 inches available. **Channel catfish** are plentiful in Nodaway County Lake, and are stocked every year for anglers to catch. The **hybrid striped bass** population is doing quite well since first being stocked in 2013, and has become very popular. Several year classes are moving through the system providing anglers opportunities for Hybrid striped bass over 24 inches. Troll the open water in front of the dam with lipless crankbaits, spinners, or shad swim baits when targeting these hard fighting fish. The length limit on hybrid striped bass is 20 inches, with a limit of 4 fish.

### Driving Directions

From Maryville, take Highway 148 north 5.50 miles to the area.

## North Bethany City Reservoir

(Northwest Region)

**Best Bets**

Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Channel Catfish

**Prospects**

North Bethany City Reservoir (72 acres) is a clear and deep (40+ feet) lake which serves as one of two city water-supply lakes. The lake is surrounded by wooded slopes and offers a scenic, quiet setting close to town for anglers and folks that just want to get outside. There is a concrete boat ramp, a new floating fishing dock, and associated parking areas to assist anglers. Electrofishing surveys in 2024 showed the fishery offers good numbers of nice-sized (7-9 inches) **bluegill**. Most bluegill (80 percent) in our surveys were larger than 6 inches with 12 percent over 8 inches.

There were also good numbers of smaller **largemouth bass** in our surveys. Most bass (62 percent) were less than 12 inches but all of those fish were legal for anglers to harvest given the 12-15 inch protected-slot limit on this lake. This is a great opportunity for kids to experience some success catching *and* keeping bass, plus enjoy a tasty meal (many anglers prefer eating smaller bass). Harvest of these smaller bass also promotes faster growth for other bass in the lake through reduced competition.

The 2024 surveys showed **redeer sunfish** remain abundant with some good-sized fish (7-9 inches).

**Channel catfish** are stocked in the lake every two years at a rate of 10 catfish per acre.

Anglers can find largemouth bass concentrated for spawning along the shoreline in March-April. Bluegill spawning typically occurs where shallow openings occur in the aquatic vegetation during May-June. Submerged aquatic vegetation can become very abundant in the shallows through the summer, so in 2017, **grass carp** were stocked to help reduce excessive vegetation and facilitate fishing success as the fish mature. We expect to see greater reductions in aquatic vegetation as these grass carp mature. Edges and breaks in the submerged vegetation should be targeted by anglers for all types of fish throughout the summer-fall seasons.

**Driving Directions**

Two miles north of the city of Bethany on US Highway 69, then west 1/2-mile on W Intrepid Road.

**Pa Sole Prairie Conservation Area**

(Southwest Region)

**Information**

417.895.6880

**Best Bets**

Channel Catfish

**Prospects**

Pa Sole Pond is 1.5 acres in size. The pond contains Channel catfish, Largemouth bass, and Bluegill. **Channel catfish** should continue to provide good fishing as they are stocked every year. **Largemouth bass** fishing will be good for catch-and-release with many being under the minimum length to keep. **Bluegill** fishing will be fair.

**Perry County Lake**

(Southeast Region)

**Information**

573-290-5730



Handicap Accessible

**Best Bets**

Largemouth Bass, Redear Sunfish, Bluegill, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Channel Catfish

**Prospects**

Perry County Lake is a 103-acre lake that offers a variety of fishing opportunities. In addition to two boat ramps, there is good access to shoreline fishing along much of the perimeter of the lake. Survey results from the spring of 2024 indicate **Largemouth bass** fishing should be good in 2025. We captured 116 stock length or greater ( $\geq 8$  inches) bass per hour of electrofishing. Size structure was excellent with approximately 40 percent of the bass that were greater than 8 inches were greater than 15 inches. There was a good number of bass over 18 inches and we collected several bass over 6 pounds. Bass anglers should target habitat including rip rap along the dam, brush piles, aquatic vegetation beds, or the aeration boils where gizzard shad congregate. **Bluegill** fishing should be fair. Bluegill 6 to 7 1/2 inches are common, but very few exceed 8 inches. Large **Redear Sunfish** (8-10 inches) are common and can be difficult to catch but provide anglers with an excellent challenge. **White** and **Black crappie** are abundant, but both populations are stunted. Anglers will find very few crappie longer than nine inches. Anglers are strongly encouraged to harvest 30 crappie per day. Hopefully, this will reduce crappie densities, which will improve the growth of the

remaining crappie. Minnows or tube jigs fished near woody cover works well for crappie. Each fall, 3,000 **Channel Catfish** are stocked in the lake. These stockings have produced a good catfish population and fish up to 10 pounds are present. Survey results from 2023, indicate that anglers should expect approximately 60 percent of the catfish to be over 16 inches. Anglers should fish with cut baits, stink baits, or night crawlers. This lake also supports a unique fishing opportunity in Southeast Missouri. **Hybrid Striped Bass** (1,000 per year) have been stocked annually since 2005. The minimum length limit is 20 inches, and the daily limit is 4. Each year, multiple anglers report catching hybrid striped bass greater than 7 pounds.

### Driving Directions

From Perryville, take Route T west 1.5 miles, then County Road 700 southwest to the area.

## Pony Express Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Crappie, White, Largemouth Bass

### Prospects

Spring electrofishing surveys on Pony Express Lake (240 acres) showed significant increases to the **largemouth bass** population in 2024. Fishermen should find fast action of sub-legal bass this year but surveys also indicate that there are plenty of larger bass to target with 38 percent of bass are over 15' and 14 percent are over 18". Largemouth Bass can be located in the many hinge-cut trees during spring spawning but move to deeper submerged structure (tree stumps and brush piles) in the summer. Our 2024 survey results suggested the crappie population size structure continues to slowly improve. Catch rates for **black and white crappie** show that the population is dominated by smaller crappie but there is also a nice population of crappie in the 10-12 inch range. The best crappie fishing occurs near shore during the spawning period (April-early May) and most anglers are successful using small jigs. During warmer summer months, larger crappie are often concentrated in submerged brush. We encourage fishermen to keep their limit of

small crappie to help the overall population continue to improve.

**Channel catfish** are regularly stocked and anglers often enjoy good catch rates for fish 16-22 inches with larger fish caught on occasion. Some of the best catfishing action occurs after rain events when fish concentrate to feed at inlets to the lake. During summer, many catfish are caught along old creek channels in the main body of the lake. The most popular catfish baits include worms, cut baits, and prepared stink baits. **Common carp** are abundant and can be caught on corn or prepared dough baits. Carp are concentrated in the shallow arms of the lake during late spring, where their spawning activity is easy to detect with extensive splashing. This lake offers a great opportunity for bowfishing and removing the carp will help the sports fish population's growth and recruitment.

### Driving Directions

Travel six miles west of Cameron on Highway 36, then north two miles on Highway 33, then 1.5 miles on Route RA to area entrance.

## Rt. J Reservoir

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

**Largemouth bass** fishing in this 94-acre water supply lake in Ralls County will be good. The bass population in Route J continues to be one of the most robust populations in northeast Missouri. An electrofishing survey in the spring of 2023 indicated good numbers of bass between 12 and 20 inches long. Anglers will have a high probability of catch a memorable fish over 18 inches with a good possibility of catching a fish over 21 inches. **Bluegill** will also be abundant with few of harvestable size. **Black crappie** are present in moderate numbers with a good size population of fish being greater than 8 inches, with few individuals exceeding 10 inches. This will offer anglers a decent population of harvestable size black crappie. **Channel catfish** are stocked annually. Most catfish will be 12-20 inches long.

### Driving Directions

Three miles east of Monroe City on Highway 36, go five miles south on Route J to the westbound entrance road, Reservoir Place.

## Savannah City Reservoir

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816.271.3100

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Savannah city reservoir, a 23-acre impoundment in Andrew County offers great potential for quality bluegill and crappie, as well as a good opportunity for fast action for channel catfish and largemouth bass. Electrofishing in 2024 again revealed a high **largemouth bass** density with an improving size structure. Of the 317 Bass sampled, 22 percent measured over 15 inches, with fish over 20 inches available. Largemouth bass can be located on shorelines, or on the plentiful brush piles all over the lake. Excellent **black crappie** and **white crappie** recruitment the past few years will provide plenty of crappie in the 8-12-inch range. Electrofishing in 2024 revealed over 80 percent of the crappie in the lake measuring over 8 inches, and 35 percent measuring over 10 inches. Crappie can be found over any of the abundant brush piles.

Quality **bluegill** that average over 7 inches are common, and can be caught near any shoreline habitat on worms or crickets. **Channel catfish** continue to be stocked and all sizes are readily caught near the bank or on weedlines in the backs of coves. Plentiful shoreline access draws many bank anglers.

### Driving Directions

From Savannah, take Business Highway 71 north 0.50 mile, then County Road 428 south 0.70 mile, and County Road 427 west to the area entrance.

## Shawnee Trail Conservation Area

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

Numerous ponds and strip mining pits are available for fishing at Shawnee Trail Conservation Area in Barton County. Forty-one bodies of water totaling more than 82 acres of water are located on the area. The largest is 14-acre Pin Oak Lake. Amenities include a gravel parking lot, handicap accessible boat ramp, primitive gravel camp sites, and privy. **Largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and channel catfish** are present in Pin Oak Lake with channel catfish providing the best fishery. Most of the bodies of water on the area contain largemouth bass, channel catfish, and a variety of sunfish species which can provide good fishing. Channel catfish should continue to provide good fishing as they are stocked in several easily-accessible ponds and strip mine pits. Largemouth bass greater than 20 inches, sunfish above 10 inches, and channel catfish up to 28 inches in length have been observed in various ponds and pits during surveys. catfish in ponds 36, 39, 40 and pits 1 and 29; largemouth bass in pits 4, 5, 10 and ponds 34, 35, and 40; and sunfish in pits 4, 24 and pond 35. Efforts to maintain improved access in the form of mowed trails to the strip mine pits and ponds on the area continue and will provide opportunity for anglers to access the various bodies of water on the area.

### Driving Directions

From Mindenmines go east on Highway 160, take Route M south 1 mile to the area.

## Sims Valley Lake

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Redear Sunfish, Chain Pickerel, Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

An abundance of submerged trees throughout this 41-acre lake, and patches of water willow along the shoreline, give fish plenty of places to hide and angler's places to fish in 2025. The 2020 spring sample indicated good numbers of **largemouth**

**bass** within the protected slot limit of 12 inches to 15 inches. This protective regulation should provide good catch and release fishing for 2025. Anglers are encouraged to harvest bass under the slot limit. This will reduce the numbers of smaller, slow growing, bass allowing the remaining bass to grow faster and eventually grow out of the slot limit and reach quality sizes, over 15 inches. Fishing spinner baits and topwater lures along the weeded edges in the early morning or late evening will be a productive way to catch largemouth bass from this lake.

The current **bluegill** population is fair. Fish for them along shoreline vegetation. Look for bluegill spawning in shallow waters in May and June. The best live baits for nesting bluegill include crickets, worms or grasshoppers set 1 to 3 feet below a tiny bobber. Remember to think small when fishing for bluegill, since the fish have small mouths, a number 6 hook should be large enough for your bait. Anglers who desire a challenge and want to land a Master Angler Award quality fish may want to try catching the larger **redeer sunfish** in 2025. These fish can be found in shallow waters in mid-April to early June. They can be found where there is plenty of standing timber and vegetation. Redear typically inhabit deeper water than bluegill and congregate around stumps, logs, and rootwads. Favorite baits for redear sunfish include worms, crickets, and grubs. Catchable sized **channel catfish** are stocked annually in the fall. They can be caught in the evening using dead minnows or cut-bait in the latter part of the winter season and early spring. Use prepared cheese/stink baits in the summertime once the water temperature warms. **Chain pickerel** offer another great angling opportunity with quality fish and good numbers expected for 2025. Concentrate angling efforts using topwater lures in and around the aquatic vegetation, especially in the spring. Sims Valley Lake offers a covered fishing dock, picnic area, privy, concrete boat ramp, courtesy dock, and includes disabled access. Anglers who want to boat fish are reminded that only electric trolling motors are allowed. There is a bulletin board located at the boat ramp with regulation signs.

### Driving Directions

At the end of Highway RA, North of Highway 60 between Mountain View and Willow Springs.

## Sterling Price Community Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

660-646-6122

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Redear Sunfish, Bluegill, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White

### Prospects

This 35-acre lake provides excellent bank and boat fishing for **crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish** and **largemouth bass**. There is a 12- to 15-inch protected slot length for largemouth bass. During recent sampling events, 42% of bass sampled were larger than 15 inches, and 13% were larger than 18 inches. Anglers are encouraged to keep bass that are below 12-inches. Many of the panfish are 8-inches or larger, with 44% of white crappie and 71% of black crappie sampled greater than 8 inches, and 39% of redear sunfish were larger than 9 inches in length. There is a gravel boat ramp and a privy on the north side of the lake.

### Driving Directions

From Salisbury Mo. Take hwy 24 west 1.7 mi. to county rd. Sterling Ave. Take Sterling Ave. 0.8 mi to lake which is located on the west side of the road.

## Towell Lake

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Redear Sunfish, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass

### Prospects

Winter Draw Down may occur in January and February after benefits have been seen in the vegetation control and invertebrate communities. Boat launching will be impacted.

Fishing on Towell Lake (Little Prairie Conservation Area) can be difficult for both boat and bank anglers due to the heavy angling pressure in spring and summer, as well as, varying amount of vegetation in the lake. Recent efforts to control aquatic vegetation has been successful and will continue, meaning easier fishing for both bank and boat anglers. 2025 will continue to see improvement in areas with habitat for bank fisherman. Anglers report good bass fishing along the edges of this vegetation. Cedar tree piles, which serve as fish attractors, were placed in areas along the points of the lake for boat anglers and no more than 50 yards out from the popular bank fishing areas.

Towell Lake has a very large shad population that produces big bass and a

decent **crappie** population. **Largemouth bass** are extremely abundant, especially below the slot length limit of 12-15 inches. A few largemouth bass over 8 pounds are caught every year and fish over 20 inches are common. Anglers using lures imitating injured shad report good luck for bigger fish, especially at dusk into the night in spring and summer. Anglers have found success in March and October fishing for crappie off the edges of dead vegetation. Anglers should expect crappie to average about 8 inches in length. **Channel catfish** are stocked annually and anglers targeting them are having success during the summer, especially bank anglers fishing from the dam. Normally, boat anglers fishing around the downed trees on the north side of the lake or the dam area, in early July, seem to experience the best catches. However, bank anglers were very successful catching channel catfish, during 2021. Catfish anglers are successful at night fishing from the bank with baits that smell bad or bleed. Springtime **redeer sunfish** fishing can be very good with live baits in deep submerged brush or when fish are shallow spawning. Fishing at Towell Lake can be very rewarding; all it takes is a little time and patience to figure out what strategy works best.

### Driving Directions

Take the Hwy V Exit in Rolla, MO off of Interstate 44. From there take the north outer road west towards St. James for 1.5 miles. Turn north on Hwy RA. In 1 mile just after mobile home community there are 2 turn-ins for Towell Lake at Little Prairie CA.

## Unionville City Lake

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

This 85-acre lake in Putnam County should provide some of the best **largemouth bass** angling in the Northeast Region. Fifty-seven percent of bass sampled from last spring's electrofishing survey were at least 15 inches long and 14 percent of the bass being at least 20 inches long. Anglers should be aware of the largemouth bass regulation change that occurred within the last several years, as the lake went from a 15-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass to the current regulation of a 14- to

18-inch closed slot. The lake also has an abundant population of channel catfish, so anglers should find plenty of 1-3-pound fish, with some 5-8-pound catfish available. Anglers are encouraged to harvest their limit of 4 channel catfish per day. **Bluegill** 6 inches and longer are not abundant, so fishing for that species will generally be slow. Crappie size has gone up over the past few years, so if anglers are able to locate them they should have a good day for 8-10 inch fish. Boaters are reminded that outboard motors in excess of 10 horsepower are allowed but must be operated at slow, no-wake speed.

### Driving Directions

Go one mile north of Unionville on Highway 5, then one mile west on County Road 120 across the dam to the access area.

## Valley Water Mill Lake

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

Valley Water Mill Lake is a 13-acre lake managed under a cooperative agreement between the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and the Missouri Department of Conservation. **Largemouth bass**, **bluegill**, **channel catfish**, **redeer sunfish**, and few **black crappie** are present in the lake with largemouth bass, bluegill, and redear sunfish providing the best fishing opportunities. Largemouth bass between 12 to 15 inches are protected from harvest and will provide ample catch and release opportunities in 2025. A good portion of the harvestable bass will be greater than 15 inches, and the opportunity exists for anglers to catch a bass greater than 5 pounds. As for sunfish, several redear sunfish over 9 inches will be available for harvest. Bluegill are also an angler favorite so larger bluegill may be harder to find, but harvestable sized bluegill will continue to be available in 2025. Channel catfish angling should also be good. The Department of Conservation supplements the catfish population by periodically stocking additional 8 to 12-inch channel catfish. Favorite baits for catfish include night crawlers, chicken livers, and prepared dough baits. The lake's extremely clear water promotes excessive vegetation during the summer months which can hinder fishing during that time. However,

observations confirm the vegetation harbors numerous large sunfish and largemouth bass. For easier fishing, try late-fall to early-spring. To increase chances of success in summer months, use weed-less techniques for bass and fly fish for bluegill.

The lake is disabled user accessible with two fishing piers and a hard-surfaced shoreline trail bordering a portion of the lake. No boats are allowed on the lake, and the lake and surrounding facilities are only open between sunrise and sunset. Please protect the lake from invasives species by not dumping excess live bait or aquarium contents.

### Driving Directions

Take US Highway 65 north from Springfield, exit at Valley Water Mill Road/County Road 102 and proceed west 1.4 miles. The lake and associated parking lot are located on the left.

## Watkins Mill State Park Lake

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)

### Prospects

Watkins Mill is a 100-acre lake near Excelsior Springs, owned by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the fish are managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. **Largemouth bass** should continue to provide some of the better bass fishing in the region. Fish over 15 inches are common. Spinnerbaits and topwater lures work well when water temperatures are around 70 degrees. Slower fished baits like crankbaits and plastics work better in colder or warmer water. During the summer months, the bass will be in the brush piles, standing timber and along edges of vegetation. Bass move shallow to spawn in the spring and to feed in the fall. **Bluegill** fishing should continue to be fair with fish up to 7-inches in length. Concentrate around stumps and in the back of coves during May using the same methods as you would for redear sunfish. **Redear sunfish** fishing should continue to be good and provide a chance to catch a Master Angler-sized fish (greater-than 10-inches). Redear sunfish are a

relative of the bluegill with smaller mouths requiring a smaller hook. A piece of worm or a fly rod with a small nymph will produce some of the best sunfish fishing around. Their spawning activity will often produce a muddy circle of water along the shoreline.

The **crappie** population has historically been comprised of stunted crappie averaging about 8 inches. However, the average size of fish and number of fish over 10-inches in length has been steadily increasing. Crappie fishing pressure has increased, which is good for the crappie population. Anglers are encouraged to continue to harvest all sizes of crappie caught up to the daily limit of 30 in order to keep improving the population. The best fishing is during the spawn off points, around shallow, woody cover and rocky banks. Jigs or minnows work equally well during the spawn. To help anglers target crappie year-round, brush piles have been added to the lake. Brush pile locations can be found online in our interactive map and in our free MO Fishing app.

**Channel catfish** grow fast in Watkins Mill Lake and are in excellent condition. The population is maintained by annually stocking each fall. Typical catfish baits fished off points and in the shallows will yield some very healthy fish. The catfish will concentrate on the face of the dam the first week of June to spawn but the resulting hatch is quickly devoured by bass. They can be caught using live bait along the face of the dam when spawning.

**Hybrid striped bass** are an addition to the lake. These fish are growing quickly and the early stocking are now legal length. Look for schooling hybrid stripers chasing shad and cast crankbaits, large crappie jigs or jigging spoons to the surfacing fish. Trolling shad-colored crankbaits can help locate hybrid stripers when they aren't schooling. Windy points, mouths of coves and drop-offs are good places to troll when looking for schools.

Watkin's Mill is currently "zebra mussel free" and we need your help to keep it that way. Please be sure your boat has been cleaned, drained and dried before launching. Also, in recent years curly-leaf pondweed has established itself at Watkins Mill, so please clean your boats and trailers after getting off the lake as well.

### Driving Directions

From Hwy 69 north of Excelsior Springs, turn west on Highway 92 just a few miles to Highway RA. Turn north and follow RA (as it turns into 161st Street) and signs to Watkins Mill State Park.

## Willow Brook Lake

(Northwest Region)

## Information

816-271-3100

## Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Channel Catfish

## Prospects

Willow Brook Lake (129 acres) is home to a healthy population of **largemouth bass** as well as good numbers of stocked **hybrid striped bass**.

Electrofishing surveys in 2024 showed largemouth bass are abundant with most (47 percent) over the minimum length of 15 inches. Largemouth over 18 inches composed 20 percent of our sample while 5 percent were over 20 inches.

The lake was part of a 5-year predator study (2016-2020) where high numbers of hybrid striped bass and flathead catfish were stocked to reduce over-abundant populations of gizzard shad and common carp, and also to increase growth rates of panfish. Hybrid striped bass continue to be stocked each year (hatchery production permitting) at a lower rate. Many earlier stockings of hybrid striped bass have now grown to harvestable sizes (>20 inches) while many fish from later stockings are smaller. Expect even more hybrid bass to reach legal size over the next few years but be sure to immediately release sublegal fish so they can help improve the overall fishery. Hybrid bass are often caught casting or trolling in open water (where schools of shad occur) using a variety of active fishing lures such as rattle traps and road runners. Several **flathead catfish** are now exceeding the minimum length for legal harvest (24") with larger fish over 40 inches. Smaller flathead catfish (11-12 inches) were observed in the 2024 surveys suggesting that the species continues to reproduce in the lake.

Fishing success for **white crappie** varies from year-to-year at this lake. The 2024 surveys showed abundance of crappie has declined since 2020; however, sizes of crappie were relatively good with most (55 percent) over 8 inches and 18 percent over 10 inches. We expect crappie growth rates will improve as the hybrid bass and flathead catfish populations continue to mature. Fish brush piles and hinge-cut trees along the shoreline with plastics or minnow-tipped jigs. **Channel catfish** are abundant in the lake and range from 13-20" with some fish larger than 20". Cut bait and chicken livers work well for these fish during the spring and summer months.

## Driving Directions

From Maysville, take Highway 6 west 0.10 mile, then SW Water Street Road south, then SW Davis Road west to junction of SW Davis Road/NW Lakeside Road to lake entrance.

## Large Lakes/Reservoirs

### Bull Shoals Lake

(Ozark Region)

#### Information

417-256-7161

#### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Crappie, Black, Crappie, White, Spotted Bass

Due to high water levels and the large 2020 recruitment year class, bass anglers should experience good catch rates of **largemouth bass** greater than 15 inches and **spotted bass** greater than 12 inches in 2025. High water levels throughout 2021 and 2022 also produced substantial year classes of largemouth bass and spotted bass, but anglers will have to wait a few more years before these fish reach 15 inches and 12 inches in length, respectively. These successful recruitment years will provide good fishing opportunities now and in future years.

Because of the lake's history of inconsistent spawning success, anglers catching **smallmouth** and largemouth bass are encouraged to practice catch-and-release in order to help maintain the bass population. Anglers wanting fish to eat are encouraged to harvest spotted bass greater than 12 inches. This species doesn't have the growth potential of the other black bass and fish over 15 inches are rare. Anglers can identify largemouth and spotted bass by using differences in the jawbone length, cheek scale size, connectivity of the spinous and soft dorsal fin, and absence/presence of a tongue patch. Crankbaits, spinnerbaits, jigs, and plastic worms catch the majority of the black bass species. During the spring, fall, and early winter months, bass can be found relatively shallow along rocky points, banks, and channel swing areas. As a general rule of thumb; poor weather conditions (i.e. rain, clouds, and wind) result in better fishing success. Other times of the year, fish will move into water 30 to 40 feet deep.

**Walleye** numbers are very good, and anglers should see a high percentage of legal-size fish in the 18-20 inch range in 2025. Due to good year class strengths and stocking success in recent years, anglers should also expect to catch higher numbers of sub-legal fish as well. Jerk-baits, live bait, and jigs catch the majority of fish during the early spring months. In the late spring, summer, and fall, spoons, drop-shotting nightcrawlers, nightcrawlers rigged on bottom-bouncers, and crankbaits slowly trolled along flats and points at or just above the depth of the

thermocline catch good numbers of fish. The **white bass** population has experienced below average spawning success so anglers may notice a decline in the white bass numbers, especially smaller sizes. Also, the spring-time white bass spawning runs can be difficult to pattern if the lake level fluctuates and river flows change frequently. Missouri residents 16 years of age and older who fish the Arkansas portion of Bull Shoals Lake should take advantage of the \$10 White River Border Lakes Permit. This permit allows these anglers to fish the Arkansas portion of this lake without purchasing an Arkansas nonresident fishing permit.

**Crappie** fishing has been very good using jigs and minnows in the spring and fall with anglers utilizing the 171 fish habitat structures installed by the Missouri Department of Conservation and paid for with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Bass Pro. Anglers wanting locations of the lake's brush structures can visit the MO Fishing App for smartphones or download coordinates to your sonar unit from MDC's MO Fishing Interactive Map on the website. Remember to help STOP the spread of aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels by cleaning, draining, and drying out your boat and equipment before traveling to another lake or river.

#### Driving Directions

The Pontiac, Spring Creek, and Theodsia Accesses are in Ozark County and located off of Highways W, HH, and 160, respectively. Beaver Creek, River Run, and K-Dock accesses are in Taney County and located off Highways O, 76, and K, respectively.

### Lake of the Ozarks

(Central Region)

#### Information

573-346-2210

#### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Crappie, White, Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Paddlefish, Walleye, White Bass, Bluegill

#### Prospects

Black bass fishing will be similar to last year on the Niangua and Glaize Arms. Catch rates for bass were much higher than in the past few years while the percent of fish over the length limit was slightly lower, anglers may catch more fish but throw more back. Both bass and crappie were in excellent body condition, possibly due to increased forage from the cicada emergence and abundant shad this

year. **Largemouth bass** electrofishing surveys conducted during the spring of 2024 indicated that the percentage of the population equal to or greater than the 15-inch minimum length limit was 15 percent on the Niangua Arm and 16 percent on the Glaize Arm. The percentage of the population of **spotted (Kentucky) bass** over the 12-inch minimum length limit on the Niangua arm was 33 percent, and on the Glaize Arm was 25 percent. Although bass can be caught year-round, the best times are spring and fall, especially around points, brush piles, and docks. The best producing lures are topwater baits (low light periods), plastic worms, jigs, crankbaits, and spinnerbaits. Winter is also an excellent time to fish for bass by slowly fishing jerkbaits off points or pea gravel banks. Crappie fishing will be slower in 2025 than the past several years. Drought conditions led to poor recruitment of crappie in 2022 and 2023. During the fall of 2024, approximately 75 percent of both **black crappie** and **white crappie** on the Glaize Arm were equal to or greater than the 9-inch minimum length limit. Concentrate on brush piles, especially those located on or near points. The ability to locate good structure is the key to successful crappie fishing on Lake of the Ozarks.

Visit: <http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z4u> for information about brush piles that have been placed in the lake by MDC staff. Small jigs (1/32 to 1/8 ounce) and minnows are the best baits.

Catfish action in 2025 should be similar to the past few years. The best months are April through September for **channel catfish**. **Blue catfish** remain active later into the fall and can be caught year-round. Drifting and fishing live or cut shad on days with a light breeze consistently produces the best catches. Blue catfish have a tendency to inhabit open water, so fishing some distance from the shoreline with your bait several feet off the bottom may increase your odds. The mouths of coves, deep flats, and river channel breaks are prime areas. Note that a protected slot length limit pertaining to blue catfish went into effect in 2014. All blue catfish from 26 inches to 34 inches in length must be immediately returned to the water. If you are after channel catfish, try to keep your bait on or near the bottom, and fish relatively close to the shoreline. To catch **flathead catfish**, use live bait such as a small bluegill or green sunfish instead of cut bait and fish near large boulders or woody cover.

**White bass** fishing should be fair. Fish windy points, submerged islands and long, sloping points using either artificial lures or shad. Opportunities for

catching **hybrid striped bass** are good in the Truman Dam tailwater and, during the summer and winter months, in spring-fed areas of the lake. **Walleye** have been consistently stocked in Lake of the Ozarks since the mid-1990's. Walleye are typically caught by trolling crankbaits on steep rocky points and humps. Jigs tipped with either minnows, nightcrawlers, or a twister tail grub, fished on or near the bottom, is another productive technique. Unlike bass, walleye tend to prefer bright colored jigs and dressings such as orange, white, and chartreuse. The lake also offers good fishing for a number of other species including paddlefish, sunfish, gar, and common carp. Remember to use proper handling techniques when releasing fish back to the water to ensure their survival.

## Lake Taneycomo

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Largemouth Bass, Redear Sunfish

### Prospects

Lake Taneycomo is primarily a trout fishery. Approximately 90 percent of the fish that anglers catch are rainbow trout, with brown trout comprising another 6 to 7 percent of the catch. A limited fishery for other species is present within the lower part of the lake, primarily below Rockaway Beach. Rainbow and brown trout populations in Lake Taneycomo are maintained through releases of hatchery-reared trout. Approximately 560,000 rainbow trout and 15,000 brown trout are stocked annually into Lake Taneycomo. The first 1.5 miles of Lake Taneycomo is heavily influenced by hydropower releases. During heavy generation periods, this reach contains deep, swift-moving water. Safe fishing is restricted to shoreline areas and drifting in boats at these times. During non-generation periods, the entire area becomes a series of shallow, slow-moving pools interspersed with a few short, shallow riffles. Boating is difficult and hazardous under these conditions and nearly all anglers either wade or fish from the bank. Deeper water limits further downstream wade fishing and boat fishing becomes progressively more popular downstream. Cooper Creek Access, Rockaway Beach

Access, and Empire Electric Park each have covered public fishing docks that are accessible to disabled users. Several fishing docks are also available to the public in the Branson Lakeside RV Park and along the lakefront at the Branson Landing. Numerous privately-owned docks and resorts offer additional fishing access.

**Table Rock Dam to Fall Creek:** Due to bait restrictions and a 12"-20" protected slot limit, this area consistently maintains a higher fish density than the portions of the lake below Fall Creek. Here, anglers are required to immediately release all rainbow trout between 12" and 20". Quality sized **rainbow trout** are abundant in this area as a result of the slot limit and have increased even more in recent years. When surveyed in September 2024, the percentage of rainbow trout greater than 13" and 16" in this reach was 77% and 31%, respectively. In addition, several of the rainbow trout sampled were greater than 20". Only artificial lures and flies may be used in the upper three miles from Table Rock Dam to the mouth of Fall Creek. Soft plastics and natural and scented baits are prohibited in this area. No trout are stocked within this reach; however, densities remain high due to low harvest and fish immigration. Fly fishing is a popular form of angling in this part of the lake and scuds, sow bugs, and soft hackles are popular fly patterns. Fishing at night with streamers and stickbaits are effective methods for catching the larger sized trout in this area.

**Below Fall Creek:** Due to increased harvest and shorter retention time, the size structure of rainbow trout within this area reflects a put-and-take fishery. Stock size (greater than 11") rainbow trout comprise the majority of the population below Fall Creek, however quality fish are still present. When surveyed in September 2024, 17% of rainbow trout sampled in this area were greater than 13" and 6% were greater than 16". Routine stockings keep fish densities adequate throughout this area and the absence of a length limit for rainbow trout in this area improves the likelihood of keeping a limit of trout. Fishing with natural and scented baits is popular in this area in addition to artificial lures and flies.

**Brown trout** numbers in Lake Taneycomo have increased compared to previous years and quality size fish are abundant. During the September 2024 electrofishing sample, 94% of the brown trout were greater than 13", 55% were greater than 16", and 20% were greater than the minimum length limit of 20". Anglers are encouraged to practice good catch and release habits for the trout they catch in the lake, especially in the fall when dissolved oxygen levels

are low. Reducing excessive handling of fish and minimizing fight time will help to ensure fish remain healthy for future years.

All three species of **black bass** are present in Lake Taneycomo, however **largemouth bass** comprise the majority of the black bass population. Electrofishing surveys conducted on the lower end of the lake indicate that a high-quality population of largemouth bass exists. In the spring 2024 survey, 70% of the largemouth bass sampled were greater than 12" and 61% were greater than 15". Four percent of largemouth bass captured during these surveys were greater than 20". Most of the bass fishing takes place in the warmer water of the lower lake, mainly below Rockaway Beach. Quality **bluegill** fishing opportunities exist in the lower lake as well. Approximately 41% of bluegill sampled in 2024 were greater than 6" and 3% were greater than 8". **Redear sunfish** are also plentiful in the lower lake with 13% of fish in the spring sample being greater than 9". A fair population of **black crappie** are present in the lake and can provide good fishing in the winter and spring. Bass, crappie and sunfish are typically caught in higher numbers in the creek arms and larger coves in the spring and summer and move to areas on the main lake in the winter. If warmer water is released through the flood gates of Table Rock Dam, **walleye**, **smallmouth bass**, and **white bass** can be caught below the dam.

Predominant benthic invertebrates include three primary taxa: Amphipoda (scuds), Isopoda (sowbugs), and Chironomidae (midge larvae). Sculpins and crayfish are also important food items for larger trout. Due to low dissolved oxygen conditions present in Lake Taneycomo in the fall, anglers should attempt to minimize the time that they fight and handle fish caught below the dam to ensure the health of the fish. All anglers fishing in Lake Taneycomo upstream from the Highway 65 bridge near Branson are required to have a trout permit and a trout permit is required for all anglers lakewide in order to possess trout. The daily limit of trout is four (4) with a possession limit of eight (8). Of these, only one (1) fish in the daily limit and two (2) fish in the possession limit may be brown trout, and the minimum length limit for brown trout throughout the lake is 20". Fishing for fish other than trout is subject to statewide regulations for impoundments.

## Long Branch Lake

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420

**Best Bets**

Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass),  
Channel Catfish, Blue Catfish, Common Carp

**Prospects**

Results of a 2024 survey indicated that **largemouth bass** numbers will continue to be low at Long Branch Lake, but a high proportion of those caught by anglers in 2025 will be 15 inches or longer. **Hybrid striped bass** fishing will be good in 2025 for anglers that concentrate on fishing main lake points, keeping a watch out for schooling hybrids breaking the surface feeding upon gizzard shad. **Channel catfish** in the 2-3-pound range will provide good action for bank anglers and those fishing the flooded timber in the Long Branch and East Fork of Little Chariton River arms. Large **blue catfish** are not uncommon; jugs fished with shad are most effective in spring and early fall. **Flathead catfish** are more difficult to catch but are available to those willing to use live bait in the upper arms of the lake near old river channels.

**White and black crappie** grow slowly at Long Branch Lake, and historically a very small percentage reach 9 inches in length, a size desirable to anglers. In recent years, the size structure of the white crappie population appears to be gradually improving. The results of a fall 2024 survey indicated the abundance of desirable size white crappie was high, with nearly 60 percent of those captured measuring 9 inches or longer. Abundant, small **common carp** can provide fast action for pole and line angling and bowfishing. Locations of fish attractors can be found at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZpN>. A barrier free fishing dock near the marina enhances the fishing opportunities at Long Branch Lake.

**Driving Directions**

From Macon, take Highway 36 west two and seven-tenths miles to the Long Branch Lake Road exit. Turn north on Long Branch Lake Road and immediately turn west on Visitor Center Road and follow for three miles to the marina and boat ramp.

**Mark Twain Lake**

(Northeast Region)

**Information**

660-785-2420

**Best Bets**

Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Blue Catfish,  
Channel Catfish

**Prospects**

Mark Twain Lake (18,600 acres) is located in Ralls and Monroe counties in northeast Missouri.

The St. Louis US Army Corps of Engineers, in coordination with the Missouri Department of Conservation, have placed numerous fish attractors in portions of Mark Twain Lake. A map of these locations is available by visiting the following web links:

<https://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Mark-Twain-Lake/Maps/> or

<https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJL>. Fish attractors have been added to both deep and shallow water. Some fish attractor locations can be accessed by shore. Bass and crappie anglers have reported success from targeting fish at the attractors. In 2024, fish attractors were added near Route U and Highway 107/Florida. In 2024, drought conditions at Mark Twain Lake ranged from none to severe drought, with water levels peaking at 618 at the beginning of May and remaining above 610 for a month during fish spawn. 2024 surveys and angler reports indicated an increase of young of the year for crappie, white bass, and bass compared to previous years.

**Largemouth bass** fishing surveys were not conducted in 2024 due to high water levels in May. However, several bass anglers reported that angling was better than in previous years. Electrofishing surveys in 2023 indicated a slight decrease in overall catch rates, with higher catch rates of 11 to 12-inch bass compared to 2022. Bass anglers may find only 30 percent of bass caught will be 15 inches or greater. The largest bass caught during sampling was 21.5 inches. Although recruitment has historically been low, our upcoming spring survey may show increased capture rates of young bass from 2024 based on the higher capture rates of other young fish and reports from anglers. The best bass angling opportunities will be in the spring and fall, around points, rocky banks, brush piles, fish attractors, and docks.

**White crappie and black crappie** fishing on Mark Twain Lake should be good in 2025. The fall survey of 2024 showed an increase in the catch rates for both white and black crappie, with a higher percentage of 9 to 11-inch crappie sampled compared to the 2023 survey. Many of these crappies were full of gizzard shad as they prepare for winter. Anglers can anticipate catching more crappie measuring 12 inches or longer in the spring of 2025. There were few 6 to

8-inch fish captured this year, which may indicate a potential gap in good crappie fishing in the coming years. However, capture rates for young crappie (4 inches or less) were at their highest in four years, suggesting that a stronger year class will follow this weaker one. The best fishing is expected to occur in late April and early May, when crappie can be caught in shallow water using jigs or minnows.

This year, there has been a significant increase in **white bass** caught in our crappie trap nets, averaging around 13 inches, with some individuals reaching 15 inches and several being young of the year. The best opportunities for white bass angling can be found by targeting windy points, submerged islands, and long-sloping points using artificial lures or shad. Anglers will have the most success during early spring when these fish are spawning on riffles in tributary streams, as well as in the summer when they feed on schooling shad or gather over underwater humps and mud

flats. **Walleye** abundance remains low in the lake; however, anglers have reported catches higher than average in the past several years. It is advisable for anglers to consider walleye fishing in the lake's tributary streams during early spring, where recently conducted tributary stream stockings have increased the walleye population. **Catfish** anglers can expect good fishing to continue this year. Channel catfish are abundant, and many blue and flathead catfish exceeding 25 pounds are caught each year using trotlines, bank lines, and jugs. In recent years, anglers have had significant success capturing blue catfish on trotlines and jugs baited with cut shad or herring. Catfish anglers tend to do best in the upper sections of North Fork, Middle Fork, South Fork, and Indian Creek arms.

## Mozingo Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Walleye, Crappie, White

### Prospects

Spring electrofishing sampling in 2024 on 1,006-acre Mozingo Lake near Maryville again revealed a very good and consistent **largemouth bass** population. Electrofishing catch rates were around 65 bass per hour, indicating continued healthy numbers of bass in the system. Just over 40 percent of the 255 bass

sampled measured over 12 inches, 21 percent measured over 15 inches, with several individual fish measuring up to 22 inches. Abundant habitat in the form of submerged brush piles, rocky points, milfoil weed lines, flooded trees, and shallow coves are all available to suit different fishing presentations. Mozingo hosts several bass tournaments throughout the year, and is highly pressured for largemouth bass, so anglers should be armed with multiple presentations to be most successful.

The **crappie** population is slowly improving at Mozingo, and the lake still produces quality catches of very large fish. The lake is currently dominated by a large number of 7-to-9-inch fish, however, and anglers are encouraged to harvest these fish to help reduce numbers to improve overall size structure. Spring sampling revealed that around half the crappie are over 8 inches in length, but only 6 percent are over 10 inches, with multiple individuals measuring over 14 inches. Try small minnows or jigs in the shallow timber in the spring, and use your locator to find suspended schools over deep brush piles throughout the summer and into the fall. The current daily bag limit is 30 crappie per person. Of those, only 15 crappie over 9 inches in length can be kept per person. This regulation was put in place to encourage the harvest of crappie under 9 inches, while protecting crappie over 9 inches to help the overall size structure.

Annual **walleye** stocking has improved the walleye fishery in Mozingo in recent years, and walleye fishing in 2025 again has the potential to produce excellent catches. Mozingo continues to receive 30,000 fingerlings every year to supplement the fishery. Spring electrofishing sampling in 2024 again saw catch rates over 100 walleye per hour, with 84 percent of the walleye measuring over 18 inches, and 69 percent measuring over 20 inches. Trophy walleye over 10 pounds are possible. A total of 316 walleye were tagged with orange \$25 reward tags to determine exploitation rates to help guide future walleye management in the lake. Anglers are encouraged to remove and return the reward tag off of any tagged walleye caught. This exploitation data will provide valuable information to potentially improve walleye fishing in to the future. Fish points adjacent to the channel or weed lines with deep diving crankbaits, jigs, or crawler harnesses. Fishing for channel catfish will continue to be excellent in 2020, with many fish over 10 pounds possible. Mozingo receives around 5,000 **channel catfish** every year to supplement the fishery. Excellent facilities provided by the City of Maryville

surround the lake, with campground areas, cabins, fish cleaning stations, picnic pavilions, and improved boat ramps, as well as a disabled-user covered fishing dock.

### Driving Directions

From Maryville, take Highway 136 east 3 miles, take Liberty Road north off Highway 136, travel past golf course entrance then take 245th Street west of park entrance at Park/Lake access.

### Norfork Lake

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Walleye, Crappie, White, Crappie, Black

### Prospects

From late February through the first half of March, spawning **walleye** migrate to Norfork Lake's upper end and into the lake's two main tributaries, Bryant Creek and the North Fork of the White River. Jerkbaits, jigs, and live bait catch the majority of fish during this time of year. In the following months, spoons, drop-shotting nightcrawlers, crankbaits, and nightcrawlers rigged on bottom-bouncers slowly trolled along flats and points, catch good numbers of fish. While the number of **white bass** harvested had improved over recent years, in the spring of 2019, a lake-wide white bass fish kill occurred extending from Arkansas into Missouri; so expect below average catch rates in 2025. Fishing for white bass usually begins in the upper end of the lake between late March and mid-April and anglers prefer jigs, minnow/shad imitating crankbaits, and live minnows/shad. **Largemouth bass** and **spotted bass** make up the majority of the black bass population. High water levels throughout 2021 and 2022 produced substantial year classes of largemouth bass and spotted bass. As a result, anglers should expect high catch rates of bass between 8 inches and 14 inches, or below the minimum length limit, in 2025. Also, the large recruitment class of bass from the spring of 2020 will be above the minimum length limit and should provide good catch rates in 2025. These successful recruitment years, due in part to high water levels during the summer months, will provide good fishing opportunities now and in future years. Jigs and plastic baits, such as worms, "creature" and tube baits are great choices to use

when pursuing black bass. Anglers wanting fish to eat should harvest spotted bass greater than 12 inches. This species doesn't have the growth potential of largemouth bass and often dies before reaching 15 inches. Anglers can identify largemouth and spotted bass by using differences in the jaw-bone length, cheek scale size, connectivity of the soft and spinous dorsal fins, and absence/presence of a tongue patch. Missouri residents 16 years of age and older who fish the Arkansas portion of Norfork Lake should take advantage of the \$10 White River Border Lakes Permit. This permit allows these anglers to fish the Arkansas portion of this lake without purchasing an Arkansas nonresident fishing permit. **Crappie** fishing has been good using jigs and minnows in the spring and fall with anglers utilizing the 22 fish habitat structures installed by the Missouri Department of Conservation and paid for with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Anglers wanting locations of the lake's brush structures can visit the MO Fishing App for smartphones or download coordinates to your sonar unit from MDC's MO Fishing Interactive Map on the website. Remember to help STOP the spread of aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels by cleaning, draining, and drying out your boat and equipment before traveling to another lake or river.

### Driving Directions

Lake accesses include Tecumseh, Bridges Creek, Udall, and Liner Creek which are located off Hwy 160, Ozark CR 551, Hwy O, and Hwy T, respectively.

### Pomme de Terre Reservoir

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Crappie, Black, Crappie, White, Muskellunge

### Prospects

Overall fishing on Pomme de Terre Lake should be very good. Steady or high lake levels during the spring season over the last several years has allowed for excellent spawning conditions for nearly all species. Black bass fishing should continue to be very good. There is a 13-inch minimum length limit for all black bass (**largemouth**, **spotted** and **smallmouth bass**) at Pomme de Terre Lake. Results from the most recent spring fish surveys indicate a high-density bass population currently exists. Many of the

largemouth bass captured during spring surveys were between 13 inches and 18 inches in length. More than 50 percent of the largemouth bass population is greater than the 13-inch minimum length limit, and about 20 percent greater than 15 inches. Crappie fishing should be excellent again this year. Overall densities of **black crappie** and **white crappie** continue to be very good in fall samples. Over the past couple of years crappie have been extremely successful at spawning and an outstanding number of young crappie continue to be recruited to the population. This has resulted in an extremely high number of crappie that are now greater than 9 inches (the minimum length limit) and should continue to provide excellent crappie fishing for the next 2-3 years. About majority of the crappie population is greater than 9 inches with many greater than 10 inches. **Bluegill** angling should remain fair to good using nightcrawlers and crickets. Catfish fishing will remain fair to good for **channel catfish** and **flathead catfish** with nightcrawlers and cut shad being the choice baits. Angling for **white bass** should continue to be good, the population appears to be relatively abundant and healthy. **Muskie** fishing could be improving in 2025. The most recent spring sampling resulted in slightly higher catch rates for muskie than the past few years. A good number of muskie are available ranging from 32 inches to 38 inches with several over 40 inches. Muskie are dubbed the fish of 10,000 casts due to the amount of time required to catch one. Anglers fishing for muskie must have a lot of patience and perseverance to be successful. Muskie fishing is typically best during the months of June, September and October at water temperatures between 60 degrees F and 70 degrees F. Recent data from Pomme de Terre Lake shows it takes a muskie angler about 30 hours of fishing to catch a muskie of any size and about 90 hours to catch a muskie greater than 36 inches. Muskie anglers should use heavy fishing tackle with a minimum of 30-pound test line, a stiff rod and a 6-inch steel leader between the line and the lure. Large bucktails or plugs fished over shallow water humps or points are normally best for muskies. A cloudy, rainy, and slightly windy day or early and late on clear days usually produce the best muskie action.

**Walleye** population densities are good due to past stockings. Many of the walleye exceed the 15-inch minimum length limit, and the opportunity to catch a legal-sized fish is good. Recent sampling indicates good numbers of Walleye between 18 inches and 22 inches in length. Forty-five constructed brush piles

distributed lakewide are marked with green "Fish Attractor" signs. Brush piles are typically placed in 10-30 feet of water at the normal lake level of 839 feet above mean sea level directly in front of the signs. Many other brush piles are not marked with signs. All brush piles can be found on the Intractive Fishing Map at <https://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/where-fish>

## Smithville Lake

(Northwest Region)

### Information

816-271-3100



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Walleye, Crappie, White

### Prospects

Smithville Lake is a 7,190-acre reservoir located just north of Kansas City. Smithville

Lake **largemouth bass** catch rates continue to climb and are once again at an all-time high. Catch rates in 2024 were 163 bass per hour. That number far exceeds the historic average for the lake.

Electrofishing surveys show that 42 percent of the bass are over the 15-inch mark. Casting spinnerbaits, crankbaits, and plastics around the numerous newly installed brush piles and hinge cut trees should produce some nice fish. **White Bass** fishing was excellent in 2024, and recent sampling efforts show another large year class of fish entering the population. 2025 should find plenty of white bass to catch but the size structure may be down a little. Find the shad and you will find the white bass. Fish crankbaits and pepper spoons off the main lake points or watch for them busting schools of shad at the surface.

**Crappie** continue to be the focal point of Smithville Lake. The new crappie regulation has had a significant impact on the size structure!! We still encourage anglers to harvest the undersized black crappie and throw back the undersized white crappie. In doing so, the size structure of both species are benefiting. Crappie trap netting was pushed back several weeks in 2024 due to above average water temperatures therefore exact data will not be available at the time of this publication. All indications look like we are in for another fantastic crappie fishing year in 2025. Anglers should expect

similar size and numbers of crappie in 2025. Small plastic jigs and minnows fished around the standing timber and around the numerous brush piles in the lake should produce some very fish this spring. **Walleye** fishing will also continue to be good in 2025. The management goal is to turn Smithville Lake into a harvest-oriented walleye fishery rather than a trophy walleye fishery. Sampling indicates the at 93 percent are over 15 inches while 23 percent are over 20 inches. Smithville Lake continues to receive annual stockings of walleye. The increase in stocking have resulted in the size structure going down slightly but anglers should expect catch rates to dramatically increase in the coming years. There are two primary fishing seasons for walleye at the lake: the spawning run to the dam, and the hot summer months on the points and flats. The spawning run on the dam can be frustrating for many anglers, but the stockings have greatly increased the number of fish coming to the dam. Using shallow diving crank baits work best during this period. During the summer months, walleye move deeper off main lake points and flats. The newly installed rock piles in the main lake area should produce good numbers of fish. Trolling deep diving cranks or crawler harnesses over these areas usually work best.

Catfishing at Smithville can be outstanding. For best bets on **channel catfish**, fish at night in the upper ends of the lake arms or along the shallow flats around the islands and main lake. Fresh cut shad or livers work best. **Flathead catfish** are very popular at Smithville. Flathead catfish can be caught fishing jugs and on trotlines along creek channels and rocky bluffs using fresh shad or other live baits. Remember to always label your lines and watch for boat traffic.

## Stockton Lake

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Walleye, White Bass, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Stockton Lake is a 24,900-acre U. S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir located in Cedar, Dade and Polk counties in southwestern Missouri. Crappie fishing should be good in 2025. **White Crappie** made up 62% of the fish in this year's netting surveys. Anglers will likely notice more keeper white crappie throughout the spring and early summer of 2025.

White crappie size structure was good with 53% of the fish collected in the sample over the 10-inch minimum length limit and 6% were twelve inches or longer. There also appears to be an abundance of fish in the 9.5-inch range that should provide more keepers in the future. Many of these fish will reach the 10-inch minimum length limit by late summer/fall of 2025. **Black Crappie** size structure was fair with 29% of the fish collected over the 10-inch minimum length limit and 1% twelve inches or longer. There also appears to be a sizeable year class of sublegal fish in the 7 to 9-inch range that that should provide good fishing down the road. Crappie are often caught using small jigs or minnows around brush structure. The Corps of Engineers and the Missouri Department of Conservation have created and replenished over 500 fish attractors at Stockton Lake. All maintained fish attractor locations can be found at Fish Attractor GPX Files | Missouri Department of Conservation (mo.gov). Some of the attractors are marked with green signs on the lake shore. For those without GPS technology, attractors can be found using a sonar fish finder around 20 feet of water (at lake water elevation of 867) just in front of signs.

Fishing for black bass could be poor to fair in 2025. **Largemouth bass** are the most numerous black bass species in Stockton Lake, especially in the upper portions of the lake. **Spotted bass** and **smallmouth bass** are present throughout the lake, but make up larger percentages of the population in the lower portion of the lake (closer to the dam). **A new regulation went into effect on March 1, 2019; the spotted bass minimum length limit was changed from 15 inches to 12 inches.** In survey's conducted in the spring of 2024 overall catch rates were below the long-term average. Approximately 22% of the largemouth bass captured during the surveys were over the 15-inch minimum length limit. On a positive note, surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024 revealed an increase in juvenile largemouth bass. This could lead to improved fishing in the future. Approximately 37 % of the spotted bass captured in these surveys were over the 12-inch minimum length limit. Anglers continue to report an improvement in smallmouth bass fishing on the lower end of the lake in recent years.

**Walleye** fishing should be good to excellent in 2025. Walleyes are stocked in Stockton Lake at 1-2 inches in size and typically grow to 15 inches in two years. In 2012 the Stockton Lake walleye stocking regime was changed from a biennial (every other year) stocking to an annual stocking. We have not missed a walleye stocking since 2011. A surplus of hatchery

produced fish allowed for higher stocking rates four out of the last five years. With the increase in stocking rates, anglers might notice an abundance of both legal and sublegal walleye in 2025.

Electrofishing surveys conducted in the spring of 2024 produced catch rates well below the long-term average. However, poor weather conditions likely impacted the surveys. Size structure was decent with approximately 83% of the fish captured over the 15-inch minimum length limit and 14% of fish at least 18 inches or longer. Techniques used for walleye angling depend upon the time of year and the confidence anglers have with different methods. In the spring and fall, walleye are often found along the dam, in coves, and in shallow water. Walleye are often caught on suspending jerk baits in these areas. During the summer season, it is important to fish for walleyes at or around the depth of the thermocline.

Walleye are often caught using nightcrawlers or minnows bounced along the bottom in 15 to 20 feet of water during mid-summer. Trolling deep running or suspending crankbaits or casting these baits along the shoreline and windswept main lake points can be equally effective at certain times of the year. Be sure to use good release practices on sub-legal fish, which will increase the chances of the fish's survival.

**White bass** fishing should continue to be good to excellent in 2025. There is a high-density white bass population in the lake and recruitment has remained consistent throughout the last several years. Spring white bass spawning runs occur near or in the lake's tributary streams from mid-March to the end of April. During July and August anglers can often find white bass chasing schools of shad in the early morning and late evening hours on the main lake open water areas. In the fall, angling efforts should be concentrated on windy main lake points or banks. Shallow crankbaits, rooster tails, swimbaits, and white jigs are good choices for catching white bass. Both **flathead and channel catfish** are present in the lake and at times will provide good fishing. Channel catfish are abundant, and size structure appears to be excellent. Flathead catfish are much less abundant and more difficult to catch. The highest concentrations of both channel and flathead catfish are up the major tributary arms in the upper end of the lake. Mid-May to mid-June is usually the best time to fish for catfish. Trotlines or jug lines baited with live baits are the method of choice for most flathead anglers. **Bluegill** fishing should be fair to good on Stockton in 2025. Good numbers of 6 to 8-inch bluegills are common. Bluegill fishing is usually best during the summer months using small portions

of nightcrawlers or crickets around structure 15 to 20 foot deep. The many bridge pillars throughout the lake are a great place to escape the summer sun and get into some good bluegill fishing.

## Driving Directions

Stockton Lake is approximately 50 miles northwest of Springfield. From Springfield, expect a 50 minute drive to the south end of the lake and a 70 minute drive to the north end of the lake.

## Table Rock Lake

(Southwest Region)

## Information

417-895-6880

## Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, Paddlefish

## Prospects

Fishing for **black bass** should be excellent in 2025. **Largemouth bass** are plentiful throughout the lake as a result of the high lake levels in past years. An abundant year class of largemouth bass was produced in 2020 and the majority of these fish reached the minimum length limit of 15" in spring 2024. Quality largemouth bass are present in the lake as well. The percentage of largemouth bass greater than or equal to 15" was 31% throughout the reservoir during the spring 2024 electrofishing surveys. These surveys also revealed an abundance of **spotted bass** in the 11"-14" range, with four percent of the spotted bass captured in the spring surveys exceeding the minimum length limit of 15". **Smallmouth bass** fishing should be good in 2025 with good numbers of keeper size fish available. Largemouth and spotted bass comprise the majority of the black bass population in the river arms, while smallmouth bass comprise a substantial segment of the black bass population in the main lake from the Highway 86 bridge to Campbell Point. Anglers need to fish a variety of water depths and types to find bass. Outside of the spring spawning period and in the fall, bass are often found in deeper, offshore water. Extended main lake points, humps, and bluffs are productive areas. Jigs, spoons, and drop-shot rigs are effective during summer months in the 10-25 foot range or deeper, depending upon the depth of the thermocline. Largemouth and smallmouth bass can typically be caught fishing on the bottom while

spotted bass are commonly found suspended over deep water following schools of baitfish. Good electronics can greatly increase your chances of finding suspended schools of spotted bass.

Crappie fishing should be fair in 2025. Fall 2023 netting surveys in the James River Arm revealed a fair number of age one **black crappie** in the 5"-7" that should reach the legal-size limit of 10" in 2025. Forty-eight percent of the black crappie captured in 2023 netting surveys were greater than 8" and 21% were greater than 10". **White crappie** are not as abundant as black crappie in the lake, but comprise a higher percentage of larger fish. Eighty-nine percent of white crappie captured in 2023 netting surveys were greater than 8", 52% were greater than 10", and 16% were greater than 12". Crappie fishing will be best in the James, Kings, and Long Creek arms where densities of fish are higher. The best crappie fishing will be in the spring and fall during which small plastic jigs and minnows are very effective for catching crappie around woody structure and the numerous brush piles throughout the lake. Crappie fishing is also fair during the winter months and they can be caught fishing around deeper brush piles and under docks that extend over deep water.

**White bass** fishing will be fair in 2025. The best opportunity to catch white bass will be when the fish congregate far up in tributary streams to spawn in March. Anglers willing to troll or fish jigging spoons can also catch white bass during the summer months. Gravel flats 25' to 50' deep are the best areas to troll or spoon for white bass. Trolling can also be effective in February and early March when these fish begin to move up the river arms. As water temperatures warm, the white bass will move further up the river into shallower water but will congregate in deeper holes in the channel up the river arms of the lake before moving up. Quality sized white bass are present with fish commonly exceeding 15".

**Walleye** fishing should be good in 2025. Areas around the dam, and the upper reaches of the Kings River Arm, the James River Arm, and the upper White River Arm can all provide good spring walleye fishing. Walleye typically move up the river arms to spawn around the first part of March and are often caught in the same areas as spawning white bass. However, recent studies indicate that walleye may migrate back to the main portions of the lake in the summer months and can be caught fishing or trolling near deep points and channel swings during this time. Electrofishing surveys conducted in the James River in March 2024 showed good numbers of keeper sized (> 18") walleye present. In this area, 100% of

walleye were > 15", 45% were > 20", and 4% were > 25". Spawning conditions were ideal for walleye in the springs of 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2023 resulting in good natural reproduction throughout the lake. The Missouri Department of Conservation also stocked surplus walleye in the James River Arm in 2020, 2021, and 2023 which will greatly supplement this fishery.

For experienced **bluegill** anglers, Table Rock Lake can provide quality fishing. Good numbers of quality sized fish in the 7"-9" range exist. The best time to catch bluegill is late May through early July. Look for gravel areas, points, and pockets in 10-20 feet of water. Fish on the bottom with live crickets or worms with light tackle. **Redear sunfish** are also present, especially in the James River and Upper White River Arms. In spring 2024 electrofishing surveys, 73% of the redear sunfish captured were greater than 9" and 11% were greater than 11". **Goggle-eye** are present in good numbers and can also reach large sizes (greater than 10") in Table Rock Lake. They can often be caught in the same areas as smallmouth bass around larger rock structures. Brush piles in the main lake areas also congregate good numbers of goggle-eye. Both channel and flathead catfish are present in the lake in good numbers. **Channel catfish** are more prevalent in the river arms, while **flathead catfish** are more common in the clearer sections of the main lake. Electrofishing surveys for flathead catfish in spring 2024 revealed a fair number of fish present with 45% of fish captured being greater than 20", 8% greater than 28", and 2% greater than 34". Flathead catfish are typically caught near woody structure such as standing timber and brushpiles. Both prepared and live baits are effective when using setlines, jug lines, or rod and reel, especially in late spring and early summer.

Snagging for **paddlefish** should be excellent in 2025. Numerous legal-size paddlefish were observed in netting surveys in March 2024. Ninety-two percent of the paddlefish collected during the 2023 surveys were greater than the minimum length limit of 34" and 25% were greater than 41". Paddlefish concentrate each spring in the upper reaches of the James River Arm above Cape Fair. Early in the snagging season, most paddlefish are caught between Virgin Bluff and Point 15. As water temperatures warm, the paddlefish will move farther up the James River Arm. If the James River rises enough to stimulate a spawning run, paddlefish will migrate upstream to spawn. The extent and duration of these migrations are dependent upon river flows and water temperatures but can extend as far upstream as Lake Springfield Dam. A

smaller number of paddlefish make spawning runs up the White River Arm each spring and can be caught from Eagle Rock to the Missouri/Arkansas border. Note that snagging for paddlefish is not legal in Arkansas from the Missouri/Arkansas border to 100 feet below Beaver Lake Dam. Recent studies also showed that paddlefish run up the Kings River Arm in the spring as well. Paddlefish can be legally harvested in Missouri from March 15 through April 30 and the limit is two paddlefish per day. Because paddlefish feed on zooplankton, the best way to catch them is by snagging them with large treble hooks. Look for schools of paddlefish in the lake channel using a depth finder and cast to them or troll over the school with a boat while snagging. A project to help determine the number of paddlefish harvested each year is currently underway. Many paddlefish have been tagged with metal jaw bands and anglers are encouraged to report tagged paddlefish they catch to the Missouri Department of Conservation. A large-scale fish habitat project was conducted in Table Rock Lake from 2007-2013 wherein over 1,400 fish habitat structures were placed in the lake. Another project funded by Bass Pro Shops ran from November 2022 to March 2024 in which 751 of the brushpile structures in the lake were rebuilt or newly created. Anglers can find the locations of these structures on the Missouri Department of Conservation's website at: <https://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/where-fish>. Anglers can also download the free MO Fishing App to find the locations of these habitat structures using a cell phone.

## Thomas Hill Reservoir

(Northeast Region)

### Information

660-785-2420



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass), Crappie, White

### Prospects

Thomas Hill Reservoir (4,950 acres) is in Macon and Randolph counties and provides water for cooling Associated Electric Cooperative, Incorporated's coal-fired generators. The warm water discharge results in a unique, year-round fishery. **White crappie** are one of the most sought-after species at Thomas Hill

Reservoir, and it is predicted that fishing will be good in 2025. The results of a fall 2024 survey indicated a moderate abundance of adult fish with nearly 40 percent of the white crappies captured measuring nine inches or longer. **Hybrid striped bass** are popular with wintertime anglers due to the hybrids' attraction to the warm water discharge and their fierce fight. Fish exceeding the minimum length limit of 20 inches can be caught on rattling lures, soft plastics, and jigs, as well as chicken livers and minnows. Both crappie and hybrid striped bass are vulnerable through the winter months in and below the warm-water discharge channel on the southeast side of the lake. The **largemouth bass** population continues to recover, the 2024 bass numbers improved slightly from the previous survey but the population continues to struggle due to multiple poor year classes. Although bass numbers will continue to be low, a high proportion of those caught by anglers in 2025 will be 12 to 15 inches long, and four in ten could be 15 inches or longer.

**Flathead catfish** and **channel catfish** round out the angling choices at this reservoir. Most channel catfish caught are small due to overpopulation, so anglers are encouraged to take home their daily limit of 10. There is the potential to catch a large flathead catfish (greater than 36 inches) using trotlines, bank lines, and jugs using live bait near old river channels. In early 2009, a barrier-free fishing dock was placed in the warm-water arm (Brush Creek), just northeast of the boat ramp. This dock is especially attractive to anglers who enjoy fishing for crappie and hybrid striped bass during the winter months because it is located just southeast of the warm-water discharge plume. To enhance shoreline angling, an ADA accessible paved fishing jetty and fish cleaning station was completed in 2012 at the north end of the lake near the Highway T boat ramp. Brush piles were placed in the lake as fish-attracting cover from 1991 through 1994. In the spring of 2021, fifteen of these historic brush piles had cedar and hardwood trees added to them. The locations of these fish attractors can be found at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zpx>.

### Driving Directions

From Highway 63 at Excello, turn west on Highway T and travel six miles to College Mound. Turn north on Highway C then immediately turn west on Highway T for two and three-tenths miles to Glider Avenue. Follow Glider Avenue for three-tenths of a mile and turn west towards the boat ramp and fishing jetty.

## Truman Lake

(Kansas City Region)

**Information**

660-885-6981



Handicap Accessible

**Best Bets**

Crappie, White, Crappie, Black, Blue Catfish, Paddlefish, Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)

**Prospects**

2025 will be good year for fishing on Truman Lake. **Crappie** fishing should be good across the entire lake in 2025. In the fall crappie surveys, overall catch rates were down but most sites had excellent numbers of 9-11" **white crappie**. The **black crappie** catch rates were the lowest they have been in several years, likely due to a string of drought years. The Pomme de Terre and Tebo Arms as well as the lower lake tend to have clearer water and as a result have a higher percentage of black crappie. The upper portions of the South Grand and Osage Arms tend to have murkier water and can be almost entirely white crappie. In general, the upper portions of the lake have larger crappie, and the lower portions of the lake tend to have more crappie. The spawn is one of the best times to catch fish from the bank and a boat isn't necessary to get in on excellent fishing. Spawning areas usually have flatter slopes and gravel banks. Fish will move to the bank early and late in the day early in the spawn during the spawn. Spawning fish can be found earliest at the upper ends of the lake in the major tributaries and the spawn will progress toward the dam as water on the lower lake warms. The land surrounding most of Truman Lake is public land owned by the Corps of Engineers. This gives anglers ample opportunity to fish from the bank. A good map with county roads and lake depths is a great tool to have. Spawning fish can be caught vertical jigging from the bank or casting and retrieving a jig fished about 12-18 inches below a float. In the summertime, you can find crappie on timbered flats near channels or along timbered bluffs. Vertical jigging sometimes works well for these fish, but as jig fishing becomes less productive, minnows will work best. Fall is a time of transition with fish moving from summer to winter patterns. Fish can be targeted on timber near creek channels or bluffs. Winter crappie fishing on Truman is some of the best fishing to be had. If there is open water, you can catch crappie. Fish gather in large

schools in the winter and once you locate a school, fishing can be on fire. Traditional spots are timber along steep points and bluffs and shallower water upstream on major tributaries. On the lower lake, fish the bluffs and timbered points. In the mid-lake area, fish standing timber and brush piles near creek channels.

One of the best and most commonly overlooked patterns on Truman is fishing shallow water. During the heat of the summer and cold of winter, try fishing in-water 8 feet deep or shallower. Some of the best wintertime crappie fishing can be found in shallow water in the upper reaches of main lake tributaries. Areas to try on the South Grand Arm are Cooper Creek, Deepwater Creek, Pretty Bob Creek, Hay Creek, and Big and Little Otter creeks. Wintertime fishing is good on Tebo Creek upstream of Windsor Crossing. On the Osage try Briley Creek, Big and Little Muddy creeks, Wright Creek, and Hogles Creek. It can also be very productive up the major tributaries as crappie follow the shad. Look for brush in and along the channel.

Beginning in 2009, the MDC placed numerous large cedar brush piles in Truman Lake. A map of these locations is available by visiting the following web link: <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJL>. Fish attractors have been added to both deep and shallow water. Bass and crappie anglers have reported good success from fish attractors. In 2024, brush piles were added near the Fairfield boat ramp.

Fishing for **blue catfish**, **channel catfish**, and **flathead catfish** should continue to be good across the entire lake. Truman has an abundant population of small blue catfish under 26" (~7 lbs.; <https://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/species/catfish/catfish-weight-chart>). Anglers are encouraged to harvest small blue catfish when they catch them even if they are small than you would normally harvest. The number of blue catfish in and above the slot-length limit has steadily increased in recent years and is currently being evaluated with population monitoring. Blue catfish tend to school by size, keep moving and try new spots to maximize your chances to find a spot with larger fish. Blues can be caught on flats throughout much of the year. Concentrate along channel brakes during the fall and deep holes and bends in channels in winter. Don't underestimate fishing opportunities for blues in the winter months, anglers have some of the most consistent blue catfish bites during the coldest months of the year. Blue catfish can be caught on rod and reel anchored or drifting cut shad. Anchoring up and fishing is often best in the cold winter months while drifting is more

successful when the water is warm in the summer months. Blues can also be caught effectively drifting or anchoring jug lines baited with cut shad on flats and channel ledges. During periods of high water, channels and blues will forage in the newly flooded vegetation. Channel catfish can be targeted on the flats with worms or prepared baits. Channel catfish will move to rip rap near roads and bridges to spawn in May and early June. Truman is home to some large flatheads. Prime locations are the upper portions of the Grand and Osage arms and the Tebo Arm. For flatheads, fish with live green sunfish or goldfish near old fencerows, timbered flats and main lake points with timber near the channel. Set lines should be set fairly shallow during summer months when the thermocline is present. Rod and reel anglers have good luck targeting flatheads in the spring on the Osage and South Grand rivers and Deepwater Creek. **White bass and hybrid striped bass** fishing should be good in 2025. White bass numbers may be down some from recent years. Truman has received several good stockings of hybrids since 2019, and those classes are producing some nice fish. There should be good numbers of fish over 20" in 2025.

In April and May, and sometimes as early as March, white bass can be caught making their spawning runs up the major tributaries like the Pomme de Terre, Osage, Sac, South Grand, and Tebo arms. Other minor tributaries to the Osage also support good white bass fishing during these times. To name a few; Weaubleau and Bear Creeks, though there are numerous other small tributaries where this occurs. Rooster tails and lipless crankbaits resembling shad work well during this period. Summertime will find white bass and hybrids associated with mid and lower lake humps and points. Drifting live shad over these areas is one of the best ways to catch hybrids. Trolling crankbaits or jigging spoons over humps can also work well. White bass and hybrids can be caught on or near the surface in summer and early fall chasing schools of shad. Good topwater choices are spooks, pop-Rs, and similar style baits. Periods of water release from the dam create current within the lake, making locating schools of white bass and hybrids predictable. Whites and hybrids will be on points or humps with current flowing over them. Points on the lower Osage and Grand arms, areas near KK Island and the mouth of the Pomme de Terre Arm, and the weir in front of the dam, are all traditional locations that annually produce good catches of white bass and hybrids. White bass and hybrids will move into shallow water along windblown points during the fall. Target these fish

with white rooster tails, spoons or imitation shad baits. White bass and hybrids will move up major creeks in the winter following shad to warmer water. **Walleye** fishing on Truman Lake should be good in 2025. Truman has several good year classes contributing to the fishery right now, particularly the 2019 and 2021 year-classes. These year classes should result in good numbers of 20+" walleye. A run of good year-classes will provide above average fishing opportunities for the next few years. Even with good recent year-classes, walleye fishing on Truman Lake still takes some work compared to some of the other Missouri reservoirs with walleye. Even the best walleye anglers on Truman Lake will struggle to catch their limit of walleye when the fishing is tough.

The best arms are typically the Pomme de Terre, Upper Osage, and Sac River but there are a few walleye encountered across the entire lake. Walleye make early spring runs up tributaries and concentrate in pools just below riffles. Summertime fish can be caught on gravel points using crankbaits, or slow trolling night crawlers, jigs tipped with minnows, or crankbaits over humps and long gravel points. Jigging spoons also work well. Main lake points on the lower Grand and Osage arms, the area around the mouth of the Pomme de Terre Arm and KK Island, and the lower lake near the dam, are good locations to try. Mid-summer walleye can also be targeted on the lakes many humps. Humps that come up from 15 to 5 feet on flats near the river channel can hold good numbers of walleye. These fish can be targeted by trolling crankbaits or using jigging spoons tipped with minnows or night crawlers.

The **paddlefish** snagging season is March 15 through April 30. Snagging should be good for legal fish (greater-than 34 inches in length) in the upper Osage from below the Talley Bend area to above the Taberville Access with many fish greater than 45 pounds. As the water warms in the spring, paddlefish move upstream to spawn. Start snagging lower in the lake around Talley Bend and below at the beginning of the season and move upstream with the fish for the latter parts of snagging season as water temperatures and flows increase. The paddlefish population is maintained through annual stockings by the MDC. Snaggers need to remember that once they have a daily limit of two paddlefish they are prohibited from continuing to snag, snare, or grab that day. Remember to use proper handling techniques when releasing sublegal fish back to the water to ensure their survival. Gaffs should not be used to land fish smaller than 34 inches. Paddlefish can be landed with

large dip nets or ring poles, like those used to catch live animals.

The **largemouth bass** fishing may be tough on Truman Lake in 2025. If you catch a good day, you can still get into good bass fishing but there's likely to be more tough days in between than you may have on some of the other large reservoirs in the state. **Spotted bass** numbers have been down the last few years. Spotted bass are most abundant in clearer, rockier areas found on the lower lake. Largemouth bass can be caught in a wide variety of habitats throughout the lake. Some of the best locations to catch bass are the lower half of the South Grand Arm, from upstream of Bucksaw down. Another area to fish is the Osage Arm between Talley Bend and Berry Bend downstream to the dam. The Pomme de Terre Arm and areas on the Tebo Arm also hold good bass. Another good place to find fish is in shallower brush piles placed by MDC. Late winter/early spring try suspending jerkbaits on main lake or secondary points. Spring will usually find fish moving into warmer water creeks, the backs of coves, and cove pockets. Try spinnerbaits or jigs for these fish. During rising or high water, look for fish in the newly flooded cover. Fish around green flooded vegetation and don't overlook piles of driftwood in pockets. During periods when water is being released from the dam, fish areas where current develops. This concentrates baitfish and bass. The downstream side of points and humps are good places to start. During the summer months, bass can be caught early and late in the day on buzzbaits and other topwater baits. Topwater baits can be a good choice throughout the day during the fall. As the sun gets higher, switch to a large worm or jig. When the water cools in fall, bass will begin migrating to the backs of coves and into creeks following the shad. Spinnerbaits and crankbaits are good choices during this time of year and bass can be caught in shallow water, 2-4 feet, feeding on shad. Some of the best spots to look for bass are on shallow structure near deeper water and also look for old creek channels with trees. Shad and bluegill are the primary bass food source, so baits with silver and white or sunfish patterns work well.

## Wappapello Lake

(Southeast Region)

### Information

573-290-5730

### Best Bets

Largemouth Bass, Crappie, White, Channel Catfish, White Bass, Flathead Catfish

## Prospects

Wappapello Lake is an 8,400-acre reservoir that offers a variety of fishing opportunities.

**Crappie** fishing should be fair in 2025. The catch rate of **white crappie** over 9 inches in the 2024 fall trap net survey was not as high as it was in 2023, but similar to what we have observed in past years.

Although not as abundant as in 2023, there should be a decent number of white crappie in the 9- to 12-inch range. A majority of the **black crappie** in the lake will range from 5 to 8 inches. However, we are starting to see more black crappie over 9 inches than we have seen in the past. A new regulation for crappie was implemented in the spring of 2019. The daily limit is 30 crappie, but no more than 15 fish can be over 9 inches. Anglers are encouraged to keep fish under 9 inches (especially black crappie) to help reduce densities of slow growing crappie. In the spring, anglers should target crappie in shallow areas around brush piles or on shallow flats. In the fall and winter, crappie can be found cruising large flats adjacent to the old St. Francis River channel, suspended in the old river channel, or in some of the larger creek arms.

The **largemouth bass** fishing should continue to be good in 2025. In the spring electrofishing survey in 2024, we captured 117 bass per hour greater than 8 inches. Approximately 23 percent of the bass over 8 inches were over 15 inches, and 10 percent were over 18 inches. Anglers should target largemouth bass in the spring along rocky banks and in shallow water around structure in the summer. **White bass** fishing will be fair in 2025, and anglers should expect a good number of white bass in the 14- to 16-inch range.

Anglers should target white bass in the spring on the northern end of the lake as they move up the St. Francis River. Anglers can also be successful pursuing schooling white bass and largemouth bass that are chasing shad during the summer months.

**Bluegill** fishing is fair, with many of the fish in the 6- to 8-inch range. Sunfish anglers can also expect to catch **redeer sunfish, warmouth, green sunfish, and longear sunfish**.

Anglers can expect quality **channel catfish** fishing in 2025. There should be plenty of fish in the 16- to 24-inch range, with some channel catfish reaching over 10 pounds. **Flathead catfish** are not overly abundant in the lake, but anglers commonly catch quality fish. Many anglers are successful using jugs or trotlines for both species of catfish.

## Rivers/Streams

### Big Piney River (Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area)

(Ozark Region)

#### Information

417-256-7161

#### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

#### Prospects

The river's Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area was expanded in 2017 to include all of the Big Piney River downstream of Slabtown Access in Texas County to the confluence with the Gasconade River in Pulaski County and man has it proven a positive for the whole river system. The Big Piney River is a clear stream, especially when low, and is best to fish slowly out of a canoe or small river johnboat. If you are not catching fish from a boat, get out and wade fish the swifter habitats; it will produce a tug on the end of the line. Fall 2024 sampling was difficult due to low water, but some quality fish were still found, including 19 inch Smallmouth, 22 inch Largemouth, 10 inch Goggle-eye, and even a 24 inch Walleye

**Smallmouth bass** fishing is expected to be good throughout the special management area year-round due to great habitat. Anglers report catching good numbers of fish from 11-15 inches during 2022. Expect most smallmouth bass to be in the 10-14-inch range, but fish up to 22 inches and 4lbs are present. Fishing near rootwads and boulders associated with the current will produce more smallmouth bass than other habitats. Do not be afraid to fish the pools in the springtime with traditional largemouth lures. Also, do not overlook the lower end of pools as they can often produce numbers and quality fish as well. Focusing on the right habitats will be the key.

**Goggle-eye** fishing can also be good year-round, but the 2021 and 2022 population stabilized from recent declines due to flooding and its negative impacts on spawning success. The majority of the population currently exceeds 6 inches in length and fish upwards of 10 inches are common in some areas of the river. However, limits of fish are out there to be caught. Goggle-eye can be caught in the pools around structure and on the channel edge of weed beds. Although soft plastic crayfish imitations are always a favorite for google-eye, they can also be caught on crankbaits in the rocky sections of the

creek. When the instream vegetation comes back to the Big Piney, the Goggle-eye population will rebound as well.

**Largemouth bass** can generally be found in backwater areas and grow to over 20 inches. These fish are more readily caught in winter and early spring when these habitats are clear of vegetation. Try crankbaits, spinnerbaits or big soft plastic swim baits in these areas. Three pound largemouth are currently common in the Big Piney for those who fish the right habitats.

### Big River

(Saint Louis Region)

#### Information

636-441-4554

#### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Smallmouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Northern Rock Bass, Longear Sunfish

#### Prospects

The entirety of the main stem of the Big River is a Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area in which only 1 smallmouth bass 15 inches or greater may be possessed daily. This includes all water between the Council Bluff Lake Dam to the confluence with the Meramec River.

In 2025, the Big River should provide quality fishing opportunities for black bass, rock bass, and channel catfish.

### Washington County (upstream of the Hwy 8 bridge):

The Big River is only accessible for wade fishing or floating, but provides good bass fishing. Rock bass catch was the highest within this reach and many fish were legal-sized of 7 inches or larger. Anglers can also expect to catch quality-sized smallmouth and largemouth bass.

### St. Francois County (Hwy 8 to Hwy 21):

**Smallmouth bass** catch was slightly higher than that of largemouth or spotted bass. Fish larger than 12 inches exist in good numbers with many 15 inches or longer. Fish to 20 inches have been collected in the past few years. Anglers should fish areas with a combination of quality cover (rocks/rootwads/downed trees), moderate current and sufficient depth.

**Largemouth bass** fishing should continue good as catch of this species was similar to that of the other two bass species. Largemouth collected averaged 11-

17 inches although larger fish have been reported by anglers. Target pools and backwater areas with downed trees to catch this species.

**Spotted/Kentucky bass** Fishing for spotted bass should be very good. They were collected in similar numbers as smallmouth and largemouth bass. Many of the fish collected were between 11 and 14 inches. They are abundant in slower moving water with rock/log cover. Anglers are urged to harvest all spotted bass caught, any size, up to the daily limit of 12. This species has not been captured in surveys upstream of the Leadwood Access.

**Rock bass (goggle-eye)** Rock bass fishing should be similar as in past years. Fish over 7 inches exist in average numbers with most fish captured 7 inches or longer. Target rock bass near aquatic vegetation and boulders, with jigs, soft plastics or minnows

### **Washington/Jefferson County (Downstream of Hwy 21):**

**Smallmouth bass fishing** has been good in prior years and this is likely to continue. Fish larger than 12 inches exist in good numbers, with the majority being legal-sized of at least 15 inches. We have consistently seen smallmouth bass over 20 inches and fish up to 5 pounds. Anglers should fish areas with a combination of quality cover (rocks/rootwads/downed trees), moderate current and sufficient depth.

**Largemouth bass** are the least abundant of the black basses in this reach of the Big River. Despite low catch, 21 inch fish were seen. Target pools and backwater areas with downed trees to catch this species.

**Spotted/Kentucky bass** are abundant in this reach of the river, but not often seen over 16 inches. They prefer slower moving water with rock/log cover. Anglers are urged to harvest all spotted bass caught, any size, up to the daily limit of 12. This species has not been captured in surveys upstream of the Leadwood Access.

**Rock bass (goggle-eye)** should provide good spring fishing once again. Fish over 7 inches exist in good numbers with some over 9 inches. To catch rock bass, fish the structure, aquatic vegetation and boulders, with jigs and minnows.

**Channel catfish** numbers in the last survey were even better than what was seen in the past, which were some of the strongest seen in recent years. Many fish were 16-22 inches and several were over 25 inches. Fish for channel catfish in moderately moving water near wood.

**Flathead catfish** over 25 inches were seen in the last survey, but catch continued to be low. Try for this species near large rootwads and downed trees using live bait.

A fish consumption advisory exists in St. Francois and Jefferson counties for all sunfish, rock bass, carp, redbreast and other suckers.

### **Black River (below Clearwater Lake)**

(Southeast Region)

#### **Information**

573-290-5730

#### **Best Bets**

Walleye, Channel Catfish, Paddlefish, Spotted Bass, Northern Hog Sucker

#### **Prospects**

The Black River downstream of Clearwater Lake supports an excellent **walleye** population. Most male walleye are less than 3 pounds, but female walleye up to 14 pounds are present in the river. Anglers interested in walleye should fish the river between Sportsmans Access (Poplar Bluff, MO) and Clearwater Dam. The walleye spawn occurs from mid-February to mid-March. Male walleye will concentrate on the spawning shoals through March. Female walleye concentrate in the pools near spawning riffles. **Spotted bass** and **largemouth bass** are the most numerous of the black bass in the river. **Smallmouth bass** are rare in this section of river. The river supports an excellent **channel catfish** population. Catfish in the 5 to 10 pounds range are common. **Flathead catfish** are not as abundant as channel catfish, but they present throughout the river. Flathead catfish up to 40 pounds have been captured during fish surveys.

The **sucker** population is also excellent. Depending upon water clarity, gigging for suckers should be good in 2025. During the paddlefish snagging season, anglers have a good opportunity to catch a paddlefish below Clearwater Dam. **Paddlefish** average 20 pounds. The paddlefish minimum length limit has been increased to 32 inches (eye-fork). During our last paddlefish surveys, 52% of the paddlefish captured were >32 inches. Anglers interested in getting the current lower Black River levels can contact the Clearwater Lake Corps of Engineers at (573) 223-7777. Additional information on this section of river can be obtained by calling the number

above or by emailing Paul Cieslewicz at paul.cieslewicz@mdc.mo.gov.

## Blue Springs Creek

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

636-441-4554

### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

Blue Springs Creek, located in the hills of east central Missouri, offers the opportunity to pursue naturally reproducing **rainbow trout** on a relatively small stream. Rainbow trout had been raised at a coldwater hatchery adjacent to Blue Spring in the early 1900s (on what is now the Camp Mihaska property) and over the years, established a naturally reproducing population in the adjacent stream. The hatchery operations have been closed for several decades, and today anglers can access the creek and its self-sustaining rainbow trout on Blue Springs Creek Conservation Area south of Bourbon, MO on Hwy N on the lower three miles of stream above its confluence with the Meramec River. Flooding late in 2024 may impact abundances, but as in other years with extreme rainfall events, fish populations will recover. Rainbow trout populations in the last several years have been lower with the drought conditions experienced in late summer and fall, but the larger size classes of fish from 2022 and before should provide good fishing opportunities for fish greater than nine inches. Rainbows are found from four inches to 15 inches, with the majority of fish in the six to 12-inch range. The naturally reproducing fish are extremely wary, the water is typically very clear, and there are many low-hanging limbs on this narrow stream so using light line and stealthy approaches to fishing holes are needed for success. Deep holes and/or places with overhead cover near riffles can be found throughout the creek and are likely places to catch larger fish. Anglers are reminded to observe area boundaries on the upper portion of this creek, and to use only artificial flies and lures for any fish species pursued on Blue Springs Creek.

### Driving Directions

Located south of Bourbon, MO on Interstate 44. Take Highway N south about 2 miles; parking lots are available off of Hwy N and Blue Springs Creek Rd.

## Bourbeuse River

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

636-441-4554

### Best Bets

Golden Redhorse, Spotted Bass, Channel Catfish, Smallmouth Bass

### Prospects

Anglers can expect fair to good success fishing for most species in 2025. Flooding late in 2024 may impact abundances, but as in other years with extreme rainfall events, fish populations will recover. Fishing for **black bass** (smallmouth spotted, and largemouth bass) should be good on most stretches. **Spotted/Kentucky bass** are very abundant on the Franklin County part of the river and with the liberal daily limit of 12 fish and no length limit, anglers have the opportunity to take home several meals. In recent fall sampling, black bass densities were similar to past years, but sizes of **smallmouth bass** and spotted bass were noticeably larger, indicating anglers should have better chances of hooking into large bass in 2025. **Channel catfish** numbers and sizes should be fair in 2025; fall sampling indicated lower numbers of channels than in other surveys, but half of the channels captured were over 20 inches in length and one in 10 were over 24 inches in length. **Flathead catfish** were less abundant than channels, and their sizes were fair – one in eight were over 20 inches and one in 10 were over 24 inches. Several young of year flathead were found which should help the population grow in years to come. Popular methods to catch catfish include limb lines, set lines, and trotlines. Live sunfish usually work best for flathead catfish; nightcrawlers, chicken liver, and stinkbaits are good for channel catfish. **Suckers** are abundant and giggers should have a good season when the river is low and clear enough to identify fish properly; several species were present in good numbers, and sizes ranged from young of year to greater than 20 inches. Fishing for crappie should be fair in the many deep, slow moving pools with woody cover; crappie numbers were present in low numbers but when found were of good size.

## Courtois Creek

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

636-441-4554

**Best Bets**

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

**Prospects**

Flooding late in 2024 may impact abundances, but as in other years with extreme rainfall events, fish populations will recover. **Smallmouth bass** are the most abundant sport fish in the river and will provide anglers with the best fishing opportunities in 2025.

**Largemouth bass** are rare but can reach good sizes in deep, slow-moving pools or backwater habitat in the lower stream. Anglers should have good chances of catching smallmouth bass over 12 inches in length, as over one in three sampled were greater than 12 inches. Fifteen inch and longer smallmouth were more abundant than in past years, with about one in five being greater than 15 inches. A smallmouth over 18 inches will be a relatively rare find, but a definite possibility if you fish in-stream structure with good flow. **Goggle-eye** numbers are slightly down in the lower sections, with about 1 in 10 reaching the minimum length limit of eight inches. Fishing for other sunfish, like **longear sunfish** and **bluegill**, should remain good as well. Anglers should target cover, like woody debris, vegetation stands, and boulders, that concentrate fish in the typically clear water of Courtois Creek.

**Crane Creek**

(Southwest Region)

**Best Bets**

Rainbow Trout

**Prospects**

Crane Creek, located in extreme southwest Lawrence and Stone counties, offers the opportunity to pursue wild **rainbow trout**. The rainbow trout in Crane Creek were originally derived from the McCloud River in California in the late 1800's and the last known rainbow trout stocking in Crane Creek was in 1967. The rainbow trout population has sustained itself through natural reproduction since that time. Public access to the creek is available on Wire Road Conservation Area (WRCA) as well as at the city park in Crane. Crane Creek is currently managed as a Blue Ribbon trout fishery in the upper eight miles to maximize and sustain the fishery. While harvest is assumed minimal, one fish per day at least 18 inches long is allowed. Only flies and artificial lures are permitted in this Blue Ribbon management zone. During snorkel surveys in September 2024, biologists counted approximately 850 rainbow trout per mile on

WRCA. This is the highest number of rainbow trout observed in this area since surveys were first initiated in 1994. A good majority of these fish were <8", indicating very good recruitment in previous years. The number of intermediate sized fish from 8"-12" averaged 299 rainbow trout per mile, while the number of larger sized fish in the 12"-18" range averaged 86 rainbow trout per mile. The number of legal sized rainbow trout >18" was 13 rainbow trout per mile. Most of the larger rainbow trout were observed in the deeper pools as well as beneath the numerous undercut banks and root wads within the creek.

**Current River (lower)**

(Ozark Region)

Information 417-256-7161

**Best Bets**

Smallmouth Bass, Walleye, Northern Rock Bass, Golden Redhorse, Northern Hog Sucker

**Prospects**

The 51-mile reach in Carter and Ripley counties from Van Buren to the Arkansas state line offers some big water for smallmouth bass, walleye and suckers. Look for **smallmouth bass** in deep bluff holes or areas with large boulders or rootwads in the summer. In 2011 and 2013, a smallmouth bass tagging study was implemented in this section of the river and although anglers caught 56 percent of the tagged fish within one year the harvest rate was only 14 percent meaning most of these smallmouth were returned to the river. In the fall, fish for smallmouth bass around rootwads or fallen trees in moderately flowing water. Springtime anglers may find smallmouth bass in the faster water near rocky riffles. There is a good shadow bass (**goggle-eye**) population in this stretch of river. In 2017, a seven-inch minimum length limit regulation was put in place for goggle-eye on the entire Current River. Concentrate goggle-eye fishing around rootwads in slow moving water and along the edges of large mats of vegetation in the backwaters during the summer. In the spring and fall, look for goggle-eye among the larger rocks along the banks in bluff pools. **Walleye** are present in moderate numbers and can be found lurking in the deepest parts of the river with the best population found in the Ripley County waters above and below Doniphan. Trolling deep holes with minnows or jigs is a preferred method to pursue these tasty treasures. The Missouri Department of Conservation has been working to boost walleye numbers and has stocked over 100,000 2-3" walleye in the Doniphan area over

the last 3 years. Walleye in the Current River must be 18 inches to harvest with a limit of four per day. Suckers make up most of the total pounds of fish in the lower Current River. **Northern hog suckers** and several species of **redhorse suckers** are the most common. A weighted line holding a number 4 or 6 size hook tipped with a worm can be very effective in the summer. Giggling these fish at night from the front of a boat is also very popular and enjoyable during season from September 15 through February 15 each year.

## Current River (middle)

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass, Chain Pickerel, Northern Hog Sucker

### Prospects

This section of the Current River extends 70 miles from Akers Ferry to Van Buren through Shannon and Carter counties offering some of the most spectacular scenery, clear water, and great smallmouth bass fishing. This is one of the most popular stretches of river in the Ozarks for floaters. A **smallmouth bass** sample was completed in September of 2022 in this section of river and the size structure of fish should be similar to recent years with the greatest number of fish between 8-12". About 25% of the fish in our 2023 sample near Powder Mill were over 12". In 2011 and 2013, a smallmouth bass tagging study was implemented in this section of the Current River with an overall harvest rate of 26 percent and 57 percent of angler reward tags returned within one year indicating a high amount of fishing pressure on smallmouth bass. The best places to target smallmouth bass are along rocky sections of the bank and in deep pools with plenty of structure such as rootwads or boulders.

In 2017, a seven-inch minimum length limit regulation was put in place for shadow bass (goggle-eye) on the entire Current River. **Goggle-eye** fishing should be like the last few years with about a third of the population sampled being over seven inches long. Goggle-eye tend to congregate around rootwads in moderate to slow moving water and can also be caught in eddies below swift moving riffles. **Chain pickerel** are common in the sections of river between Akers and Two Rivers and can be found among the thick vegetation in slow moving pools and

backwaters. **Suckers** are abundant with estimates of Northern hog suckers and redhorse or "yellow" suckers near Powder Mill in 2017 being 1,300 suckers per river mile. The best way to access sport fish habitat on this stretch of river is by floating a kayak, canoe or johnboat as some deeper runs and pools may make wade fishing difficult on this section. The National Park Service has camping and access sites at Pulltite, Round Springs, Two Rivers, Powder Mill, and the US Forest Service access at Watercress in Van Buren to aid in planning your float trip. For an Ozark Scenic Riverways map of these and other access sites contact the National Park Service in Van Buren at 573-323-4236.

## Current River (upper)

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

With camping, trout fishing, and canoeing, the 19 miles of Current River from Montauk State Park to Akers Ferry in Dent and Shannon counties has it all. There are two designated trout management areas below Montauk Trout Park that offer opportunities to experience some of Missouri's most productive trout waters.

The 9-mile stretch between the lower boundary of Montauk State Park and Cedargrove Access is managed for large **brown trout**. On this reach, only one trout may be kept per day, and it must be at least 18 inches long. Angling is restricted to hard plastic artificial lures and flies only. Check "A Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations" for definitions of these types of tackle. These special regulations provide for some excellent catch-and-release fishing and the real possibility of harvesting a trophy. Brown trout are stocked annually, but an average stocking size of 14" in 2023 provides a robust number of large brown trout still available for angling in 2025 that was evident with over 2/3 of the fish captured in the 2024 sample >15" and 22% being over the legal limit of 18"! A new strain of brown trout was stocked in this area of the Current late in 2024. Survival and size of these fish will be tracked as they grow through time. The brown trout population remains high with an estimate of 350 brown trout between Tan Vat and Baptist accesses. Anglers focusing on **rainbow trout** in this area will have the greatest success just

below Montauk State Park as densities decrease dramatically below Baptist Access. Rainbow trout are not purposefully stocked within this 9-mile section; however, they do move downstream out of the trout park. While most rainbow trout fall within the 11-15-inch size range, some may approach trophy lengths in the reaches just below Montauk. Many rainbows escaped the park and were washed downstream during the November 2024 flood and anglers may see increased numbers of small rainbows as a result in 2025.

The White Ribbon Trout Area (WRTA) stretches 7.7 miles from the Cedargrove Bridge to Akers Ferry Access and is stocked with rainbow trout on a put-and-take basis. This section has no minimum length limit, a four fish per day creel limit and no bait restrictions. Rainbows (10-12 inches) are stocked approximately once a month all year. During the months of July and August, and when river levels are low, trout stocking is limited to the cooler section with greater flow between Welch Spring and Akers Ferry. Fishing in the WRTA is less crowded than in the trout park and the stream can be waded or floated in a kayak or canoe.

## Eleven Point River

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Rainbow Trout, Chain Pickerel, Northern Rock Bass

### Prospects

Special regulations on smallmouth bass, goggle-eye, rainbow trout and walleye have produced a quality fishery throughout the river. Be sure to check local regulations and river levels before scheduling a fishing trip. Here's what to expect as you float down this scenic river in 2025.

The 17 miles from Thomasville to Greer Spring offer excellent fishing for **Smallmouth bass** and **goggle-eye** (shadow bass). To avoid dragging over riffles, spring and early summer are ideal times to frequent the upper river while water levels are high.

Smallmouth bass of all sizes are abundant in the riffles, runs and pools with recent spring samples yielding estimates up to and over 500 fish/mile and over 10% of sampled fish of legal size (over 15"). Also, goggle-eye over 9" were collected and could contribute nicely to an angler's creel. Try a deep-dive, dark crawdad crankbait in the large, rocky pools

below a riffle to lure out one of the larger goggle-eye, or a green pumpkin plastic worm to get strikes from the larger smallmouth. **Chain pickerel** are still popular among anglers as well. Modest numbers of pickerel lurk in this section of river. Access points to this area are Thomasville, Cane Bluff, and Greer.

Greer Spring instantly transforms the river into a coldwater fishery. The next 5.5 miles downstream to Turner Mill Access is home to **rainbow trout** and is designated as a Blue Ribbon Trout Area, where special regulations apply. Anglers should see balanced year-round trout numbers in this area of the river as two stockings to supplement the wild population occur in the spring and fall. Around 8,000 total rainbow trout are stocked in this section annually. Trout estimates from the 2024 sample show around 83 wild trout/mile while total trout estimates are greater than 300/mile. Most fish in this section are between 9-16 inches, but a few lucky anglers may bring home a trophy wild trout over 18" and 2.5 pounds. At certain times of the year this is also a good section for catching **smallmouth bass**, just make sure to use the approved artificial baits (soft plastics prohibited). Public access is limited to Highway 19 crossing at Greer and U.S. Forest Service gravel roads to Turner Mill North and Turner Mill South.

The next 14 miles from the Turner Mill accesses downstream to Highway 160 at Riverton are stocked with harvestable **rainbow trout** and managed as a White Ribbon Trout Area with more liberal harvest restrictions. From March to October, 16,000 rainbow trout (12-inch average) are stocked annually in this stretch of river with multiple springs. A limited number of lunkers over 4 pounds from Montauk hatchery were also stocked in this section so you never know if one of your four trout allowed in your daily limit may be a monster fish. Public access is provided at Turner Mill North, Turner Mill South, Whitten and Riverton (Highway 160).

The 13.5 miles from Highway 160 downstream to the Arkansas state line offer good fishing for smallmouth bass, **largemouth bass**, and goggle-eye. Samples of the lower river section yield fewer smallmouth bass than the upper section, but fish of similar size. The bigger water, warmer water temperatures, and pools of less current are also home to more largemouth bass than other sections of the river. In addition, persistent anglers have an opportunity to catch a few legal **walleye** (5-10 pounds and greater). Look for these tasty behemoths in deep pools with noticeable current and around woody structure in the fall and winter. In 2022 approximately 20,000 fingerling

walleye were stocked in this lower river section with the next stocking planned for 2026.

### Driving Directions

The Eleven Point River lies between West Plains and Poplar Bluff in southeastern Missouri and is near the town of Alton. Highway 19 provides access from Winona (North) and Thayer (South). Highway 160 provides access from West Plains (West) and Doniphan (East). There are six river accesses on the upper river that can be reached from Highway 19. These are the Thomasville, Cane Bluff, Greer, Turner North, Turner South, and Whitten accesses.

### Driving Directions

**From Alton are as follows:** Thomasville: West Hwy 160 (12 Miles), right on North Hwy 99 (1.5 Miles) Cane Bluff: North Hwy 19 (3 miles), left on County Road 410, right on County Road 405 Greer: North on Hwy 19 for 9.5 miles, access on right after Hwy 19 bridge Turner North: North Hwy 19 (11.5 miles), right on NF-3152 (6 Miles), right on NF-3190 which dead ends at river Turner South: North Hwy 19 (1.5 Miles), right on Hwy AA (4.8 Miles), left on County Road 127 which turns into FS-3153 (4.5 Miles to river) Whitten: North Hwy 19 (1.5 Miles), right on Hwy AA (9 Miles), left on FS-4144 (2 Miles) There are three accesses on the lower river at Riverton (Hwy 160), the Narrows (142), and Myrtle.

### Driving Directions

**Riverton:** East Hwy 160 from Alton (13 Miles) or West Hwy 160 from Doniphan (27 Miles) The Narrows: East on Hwy 142 from Thayer (21 Miles) or West Hwy 142 from Doniphan (25 Miles) Myrtle: East Hwy 142 from Thayer (19 miles) or West Hwy 142 from Doniphan (27 Miles), South on Hwy H (7 Miles), Left on County Road 278 (2.5 Miles)

## Gasconade River (Laclede County)

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

### Prospects

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye are the most sought-after fish on the upper reaches of the Gasconade River. **Smallmouth bass** fishing should be good in 2025. Fish surveys indicate lower than average numbers of smallmouth bass on this section of the river, likely due to drought conditions over the

last couple of years. Smallmouth bass are usually found near rootwads and boulders that are close to fast current. **Goggle-eye** fishing should be good. The most recently conducted fish surveys indicate good numbers of goggle-eye. Goggle-eye are often found around boulders and rootwads near submerged aquatic vegetation or stands of water willow along the shoreline. Preferred artificial baits include crayfish-colored crankbaits, soft plastic jigs, and worms fished around logs and boulders. Live bait (crayfish and worms) also work well. When using live bait, care should be taken to not introduce minnows and crayfish from other stream systems. Introductions of minnows and crayfish from different stream systems may upset the ecological balance of the Gasconade. **Largemouth bass** make up less than 50 percent of the black bass population and prefer slower flowing water, especially around stands of vegetation. Plastic worms fished Texas-style work well for largemouth bass. **Flathead** and **channel catfish** can be caught using limb lines, set lines, and trotlines in the deeper pools. Live sunfish usually work best for flathead catfish; nightcrawlers, chicken liver, and stinkbaits are good for channel catfish. **Longear sunfish** provide plenty of action for the whole family. They are especially fun for beginning anglers because of their willingness, under almost all conditions, to take very small artificial lures or a hook baited with a worm or cricket. For giggers willing to brave the cold, the Gasconade River clears up by late-November, and there are plenty of **suckers** to provide good action.

## Gasconade River (Phelps/Pulaski County)

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass, Channel Catfish

### Prospects

Anglers fishing for **smallmouth bass** in the Gasconade River's special management area, in Phelps and Pulaski counties report good fishing year-round, but especially in the winter months. Smallmouth bass from 11-15 inches are more abundant in this section than upstream or downstream areas. Historically, this section of river has had a strong smallmouth population, but the

effects of continued flooding since 2011 is being noticed. Fall 2023 samples indicated a continued decrease in the adult population of smallmouth bass, and anglers reports during 2020 thru 2022 supported this. A variety of baits can be effective, but anglers using larger crayfish imitations or shallow running crankbaits may have the most success. Large smallmouth bass can be found in deep areas of the river, below riffles. Anglers can utilize the new Jerome access in this portion of the Gasconade, just off of the Route D bridge. The site features a concrete boat ramp, ADA and gravel parking, and bank access to the Gasconade River and Little Piney Creek, and has already been tested and passed exceptionally with November 2024 flooding. 2024 was an off-year for sampling, which will resume in the fall of 2025.

The **largemouth bass** population within this section remains consistent for the past two decades. Largemouth bass prefer the slow waters of large pools and fish over 18 inches and 3 pounds are common throughout the reach. Fish the side channels and slow water to find them consistently. Angler reports, indicate an increase in **spotted/Kentucky bass** in this portion of the river, this trend will hopefully reverse should we experience less catastrophic flooding. Anglers are encouraged to harvest any legal-sized spotted bass they catch. Spotted bass are consistently growing to 12 inches and spotted bass up to 15 inches can be caught.

Fishing pressure for **rock bass/goggle-eye** is consistent throughout the area for most of the year. The recent frequent flooding has negatively impacted spawning success of the rock bass population, which is dominated by only larger adults, however in 2021 a crop of small 2-inch fish were found. Fall 2023 sampling showed most fish were between 5 to 8 inches, with some reaching 9 inches. Vegetation recovery in pools is still in progress but having a positive impact on the rock bass population. Anglers fishing for **channel catfish** can expect to catch high numbers of fish with specimens larger than 20 inches occurring on a regular basis, as well as the opportunity for fish even larger. Channel catfish are continually found in rootwads associated with good flow during the day and in pools downstream of these areas at night, searching for food. Bluegill, redear sunfish, green sunfish, walleye and flathead catfish can all be found in good numbers in this area as well. Try for crappie in deep, slow areas and you could be surprised. The Gasconade River throughout its middle portion can produce wonderful days on the

water, and you never know what fish you may pull into the boat.

### Driving Directions

This area starts north of St. Robert at the end of Hwy Y (Riddle Bridge Access) and ends at the Hwy D bridge at Jerome, MO. Please check the status of these stream accesses on [www.missouriconservation.com](http://www.missouriconservation.com) to make sure they are open and not closed for maintenance or due to flood damage.

### Huzzah Creek

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

636-441-4554

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass

### Prospects

Black bass fishing on Courtois Creek should be fair to good in 2025. Smallmouth bass make up the majority of black bass present, followed by largemouth bass. A few spotted bass have been found but remain low in number. **Smallmouth bass** sizes remain good with about one in three fish being greater than 12 inches in length, and about one in eight fish greater than 15 inches in length, but smallmouth may be less abundant than in other years with the low water conditions of 2023 & 2024 followed by extreme flooding. Largemouth bass were also less abundant than past years, and sizes were down as well. About one third of all **largemouth bass** surveyed were greater than 12 inches in length. Largemouth greater than 18 inches will be harder to find than normal, but large pools and backwater areas in the lower section of stream will offer the best places to try to find them. **Goggle-eye** sizes and numbers were slightly below normal levels. The lower end of the stream will offer the best fishing opportunities for them. Two percent of all goggle-eye sampled were greater than 8 inches. Goggle-eye are often found around boulders, rootwads, or near vegetation stands. Fishing for other sunfish, like **longear sunfish** and **bluegill**, should remain good as well. Soft plastic baits including flukes, tubes, grubs, and worms and crayfish-patterned crank baits are very productive for all species when fished around boulders and woody debris. Both float-fishing and wading can be very effective methods for accessing the best in-stream habitat.

## **Jacks Fork River**

(Ozark Region)

### **Information**

417-256-7161

### **Best Bets**

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

### **Prospects**

The Jacks Fork River contains one of Missouri's smallmouth bass special management areas which extends from Buck Hollow (Hwy 17) access to the confluence with the Current River (38 miles). The minimum length limit is 15 inches, and you can only harvest one **smallmouth bass** per day. Most of this stream is within the boundaries of the National Park Service's Ozark National Scenic Riverways. These two characteristics provide for a unique and attractive smallmouth bass angling experience. Recent samples indicate good smallmouth action for 2025. Few fish were observed over 18 inches, but smallmouth bass densities were ok, and anglers will enjoy catching and releasing fish over 8" up to the harvest size. Smallmouth bass fishing should be focused along rock ledges and boulders in bluff pools. A seven-inch minimum length limit regulation was put in place for **goggle-eye** on the entire Jacks Fork River in 2017 and fishing for these tasty fish should be concentrated near larger rocks along bluffs and in the edge of beds of vegetation. In mid to late summer, water levels are traditionally lower from Buck Hollow to Bay Creek accesses, providing more challenging float trips, but also less river traffic and fishing pressure. For detailed information on access, campsites, and river miles, contact the National Park Service in Van Buren at 573-323-4236.

## **Little Piney Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)**

(Ozark Region)

### **Information**

417-256-7161

### **Best Bets**

Rainbow Trout

### **Prospects**

**Rainbow trout** populations for the Little Piney have remained stable for more than a decade of over 1,000 trout per mile around Lane Springs. The reproducing population of rainbow trout continues to be dominated by fish under 12 inches, with the

majority being 8-12 inches; providing a great, fun opportunity for catch and release. However, anglers should not be surprised if they catch larger fish; trout upwards of 20 inches that are found in the stream's higher quality habitat. Fall 2024 sampling was limited, but encouraging with multiple year classes being found just upstream from Vida Slab and included one fish over 18.5 inches. The section of stream from Hwy 63 flowing north to Vida Slab continues to provide anglers the best chance for quality-size wild rainbow trout. Anglers continue to be very happy with this section of stream and report great days on the water catching these fish. Finally, this section of stream has the highest fish per mile number of any of the Blue Ribbon Trout Areas close to Rolla and anglers have reported days when the 5-inch fish are so active they do not give larger fish an opportunity to take a fly. When wade fishing areas not located on Forest Service property (i.e., Vida Slab Area), please obtain permission from the landowner(s).

### **Driving Directions**

Hwy 63 south of Rolla and north of Edgar Springs around the Forest Service's Lane Spring Campground, to Milldam Hollow at the end of County Road 7400.

## **Meramec River**

(Saint Louis Region)

### **Information**

636-441-4554

### **Best Bets**

Smallmouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum, Golden Redhorse

### **Prospects**

Flooding late in 2024 may impact abundances, but as in other years with extreme rainfall events, fish populations will recover. **Smallmouth bass** fishing in the Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area is expected to be good in 2025. In this stretch, smallmouth bass are the most abundant black bass species present, and anglers can expect to see high numbers of fish in the eight to 12-inch range, and good numbers of fish in the 12 to 15-inch range. Fish greater than 15 inches are also usually present in good numbers. The area will also provide fair to good opportunities for largemouth bass and goggle-eye. On average, one in three largemouth bass exceed the largemouth length limit of 12 inches, and one in eight goggle-eye exceed the eight-inch length limit.

Anglers are reminded the 15-inch minimum length limit on smallmouth bass and daily limit of one begins at Highway 8 bridge near the Phelps/Crawford county line and extends to the railroad bridge crossing at Bird's Nest Access.

On the Meramec in the Crawford and Franklin county portions of the river with an eight-inch minimum length limit, **goggle-eye** anglers can expect to encounter a fair number of legal fish in 2025. Numbers of sublegal goggle-eye have been on the increase since the minimum length limit regulation was put in place, with the indication that the number of legal eight-inch fish will continue to increase in future years. Goggle-eye fishing around submerged trees in flowing water and along the edges of water willow and submerged vegetation stands in the backwaters can be productive, as well as among boulders on the margins of bluff pools. Preferred artificial baits include crayfish-colored crankbaits and soft plastic jigs and worms.

Meramec black bass anglers can expect to see good sizes and numbers of bass in 2025. **Smallmouth bass** are generally more common in faster moving waters in riffle margins and runs at the beginning and ends of pools, and **spotted/Kentucky bass** and **largemouth bass** are usually more common in the pool and slack-water habitats. During fall sampling, two out of five of **smallmouth bass** exceeded 12 inches in length and one of eight smallmouth bass were greater than 15 inches in length. Two out of five **largemouth bass** sampled were over the 12-inch length limit and one in ten were greater than 15 inches in length, although numbers were down from past years. Largemouth and smallmouth 18 inches or longer can be found throughout the Crawford and Franklin county portions of the river. Artificial lures like plastic worms or grubs, crayfish crankbaits, or buzz baits provide some of the best results for catching smallmouth and largemouth bass.

**Spotted bass** numbers in Franklin and St. Louis counties are expected to be similar to past years. Spotted bass can reach up to 15 inches, but are most common in the 10 to 12-inch range. They are most prevalent in Franklin and St. Louis counties, and several areas provide good access to the Meramec in this area, including Redhorse Access, River Round Conservation Area, Choteau Claim Access, Robertsville State Park, Pacific Palisades, Allenton Access, and Route 66 State Park. There is no length limit on spotted bass and anglers can harvest a daily limit of 12 spotted bass, if no other black bass are taken. **Channel catfish** and **flathead catfish** can be

found in this section as well in pools and runs with boulders, rootwads and submerged trees. Catfish longer than 20 inches are present, and can be caught using limb lines, set lines, and trotlines.

**Redhorse sucker** species and **freshwater drum** are also common in the Meramec in Crawford, Franklin, and St. Louis counties. Anglers can expect to see good numbers and sizes of these species in 2025. Sucker species and other nongame fish can be harvested by gigging, but they can also be taken by hook and line all year long. Gigging season starts September 15 and runs to February 15. Giggers are reminded to positively identify their target first to avoid unintentional harm to game fish and their populations.

**Longear sunfish** are abundant in most sections of the Meramec, and although most are within the 3-5 inch range, they can provide good fishing entertainment for anglers of all ages.

## Meramec River - Red Ribbon Area (Hwy 8 to Scott's Ford)

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

573-468-3335

### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout

### Prospects

Trout fishing in the Meramec River is expected to be fair in 2025. Fall sampling indicated a low number of **brown trout** had survived from last year's stockings, and all trout numbers remain lower than historical averages. Relatively few browns survive longer than six months post stocking to reach legal size; therefore, anglers are most likely to encounter rainbows or sub-legal browns. Brown trout stocking is scheduled for fall 2024 into early winter of 2025, and if stable water conditions prevail, anglers can expect to catch fair numbers of small browns with a slight chance to hook into a brown greater than 15 inches long. **Rainbow trout** numbers and sizes in 2025 are expected to remain low, as relatively few were found in last fall's sampling. Trout of either species greater than 18 inches in length will remain rare. Trout numbers are typically greatest in the three miles of stream below the Meramec Spring confluence. Most larger trout seek the overhead cover in runs or deeper pools with downed trees, boulders, and other structure that offer a resting place or forage base. When the river is crystal clear, using light

fishing line is helpful to inducing a strike. Anglers can also expect to encounter good numbers of **smallmouth bass** and **rock bass (goggle-eye)** in this area, around the numerous rootwads, submerged timber, and bluff faces. Wade fishing is generally easiest in the upper part of ribbon area from walk-in access points on Woodson K Woods Conservation Area or through The James Foundation's Maramec Spring Park (there is a fee to park in the latter). Float-through fishing is also available from the Highway 8 access to Scott's Ford Access, but can be difficult for large or heavy watercraft in low-water conditions.

## Mill Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

Mill Creek's reproducing **rainbow trout** population has shown its ability to withstand tough environmental conditions by consistently producing good fishing. 2025 estimates are not expected to differ from 2024. Anglers should expect a moderate population, dominated by fish under 12 inches with fish upwards of 18 inches to be found. Consistent annual quality spawns, and those fish should be sipping flies in 2025. Large fish are still present in larger pools with adequate habitat.

The best opportunities to catch these wild rainbow trout are on US Forest Service and MDC properties upstream of the picnic area on Mill Creek Road. Successful anglers wade quietly into good habitats and fish slow. These wild rainbow trout can be spooked very easily. Artificial lures and flies are the only tackle permitted. Rainbow trout must be at least 18 inches to harvest, and the daily limit is one trout. This creek is small and hard to fish, but can be very rewarding on the right trip.

### Driving Directions

Take Hwy T south of the I-44 Doolittle exit. Cross Little Piney Creek and turn right on Hwy P. In four miles turn left on the county road at the Mill Creek Campground sign or wait another 2 miles and turn south of Hwy AA.

## Mississippi River (Middle)

(Southeast Region)

### Information

573-290-5730

### Best Bets

Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum

### Prospects

Anglers can expect catfish fishing to remain good on the Middle Mississippi River. Fish surveys in recent years revealed good numbers of both **flathead catfish** and **blue catfish**. Flathead and Blue Catfish 20 and 30 inches in length were common. Biologists also noted an abundance of young catfish and quite a few trophy-sized fish, with several over 70 pounds. Anglers continue to report lunkers being caught in the 60 to 90-pound range. Anglers pursuing blue catfish will find them on the current breaks downstream from dike tips and notches, and near revetted shorelines with swift current. Blue catfish also frequent deep holes near structure. Good baits for blue catfish include fresh cut Asian carp, shad, skipjack herring, goldeye, and live sunfish or goldfish. Flathead catfish are found in moderate current around dikes, along revetted shorelines and cut banks, especially if woody cover is present. Flathead catfish prefer live bait, such as sunfish and goldfish. Try fishing for **channel catfish** in slower moving water in side channels, near cut banks, or on sandbars. They can be caught on a wide variety of baits including nightcrawlers, chicken livers, and stinkbaits.

During the fall, look for **white bass** and **hybrid striped bass** near tributaries, dam tailwaters, or the Chain of Rocks area. Try jigs, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits. **Paddlefish** can be caught in these same locations during snagging

season. **Walleye** and **sauger** can be caught by drifting a minnow-tipped jig near wing dikes and rocky shorelines. **Freshwater drum** are common in a variety of habitats and easily caught on nightcrawlers or other baits.

Three species of sturgeon, **shovelnose**, **pallid** and **lake sturgeon**, can be found in the Mississippi River. All can be caught on worms, but the shovelnose sturgeon is the only species of the three that is legal to harvest. Pallid sturgeon and lake sturgeon are both protected species and must be released immediately if caught. Anglers are encouraged to educate themselves on sturgeon identification, as pallid and shovelnose sturgeon are

often confused. In recent years anglers have reported catching greater numbers of **lake sturgeon**. The increased catch is due to a state/federal effort to recover this endangered species. Lake sturgeon are a charismatic species - with a lifespan over 100 years and an adult size of 4 to 8 feet. If you are lucky enough to hook one of these large, powerful fish enjoy the fight, but be sure to release the fish promptly and unharmed. Be sure to check any fish you catch for tags and report the tag number, fish length and location of catch to your local MDC office.

Good bank fishing can be found at many locations in the middle Mississippi River. Some spots to try near St. Louis include; the Riverlands at West Alton, Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, and Cliff Cave County Park. Further south try the Chester, IL riverfront, Grand Tower, and Red Star Access in Cape Girardeau.

## Mississippi River (Upper)

(Northeast Region)

### Information

573-248-2530

### Best Bets

Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum, Sauger

### Prospects

Angling opportunities on Pools 20-25 of the Upper Mississippi River are as diverse as the habitats created by both man and nature. The upper portion of a pool typically resembles pre-impoundment conditions, with swifter current, deeper side channels, and relatively few connected backwaters. The lower portion of a pool becomes more like an impoundment with some current, shallower side channels, and connected backwaters.

**Channel catfish** can be found throughout the pools near woody drift piles, wing dikes, natural shorelines, sand bars, and rock protected banks. They can be caught on a variety of natural or prepared baits, depending on the season. **Flathead catfish** are typically found near woody cover or rock structures. Flathead catfish prefer live bait and are generally active at night. Most are caught on trotlines or bank lines baited with live sunfish. Small flathead catfish are very abundant, but several 40 pound plus flatheads were caught during spring electrofishing surveys. **Blue catfish** are also found in the Upper Mississippi River, but are less abundant than other catfish species, especially in the most upstream

pools. Best locations to catch blue catfish include deep holes, in the main channel, and especially in lock and dam tailwaters, and around rock structures. Favored baits include cut shad or herring and shrimp. Although uncommon, some blues may exceed 70 pounds.

**Sauger** and **walleye** prefer a hard, rocky river bottom and are usually found near wing dikes or riprap shorelines during warm months. They concentrate in deeper water during the winter, usually near dam tailwaters. Cool temperatures with minimal flow through the navigation dams are the best conditions for fishing success. The best technique for catching walleye and sauger near tailwaters is to fish a heavy jig, possibly tipped with a live minnow, near the bottom.

Slack water areas associated with wing dikes, tributaries, and backwaters are home to **largemouth bass**, **bluegill**, and **crappie**. **Freshwater drum**, the most common fish caught by anglers, can be found in almost any habitat, and caught on a wide variety of artificial and natural baits.

Three species of sturgeon can be found in the Mississippi River: shovelnose, pallid, and lake sturgeon. All can be caught on worms, but the shovelnose sturgeon is the only species of the three that is legal to harvest. Pallid sturgeon and lake sturgeon are both protected species and must be released immediately if caught. Anglers are encouraged to educate themselves about sturgeon identification, as shovelnose and pallid sturgeon are often confused with each other. **Lake sturgeon**, catches have increased in recent years due to state efforts to recover this endangered species. If you are fortunate enough to catch a pallid sturgeon or lake sturgeon, please check the fish for any tags, estimate its length, and note the location before returning it to the water unharmed. Additionally, contact your local MDC office with the information you've gathered. Anglers should use caution when boating in slack water areas of the Mississippi River. Bighead carp and silver carp, which are invasive species, are abundant and tend to jump in front of and into moving boats, so anglers are urged to be cautious. To slow the spread of invasive species like zebra mussels, all anglers should carefully inspect and wash their boats and trailers with hot water and drain and disinfect live wells before moving to another stream or lake.

### Driving Directions

Public boat ramps are available near lock and dams located at Canton, MO, Quincy, IL, Saverton, MO,

Clarksville, MO, Winfield, MO, Alton, IL. There are several other boat ramps located along the river as well.

## **Missouri River (Kansas City area)**

(Kansas City Region)

Information 816-622-0900

### **Best Bets**

Flathead Catfish, Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Common Carp, Shovelnose Sturgeon

### **Prospects**

The Missouri River is a tremendous and underutilized resource flowing through the Kansas City Region. The river produces good numbers of catfish over 50 pounds, even in downtown Kansas City. True trophies travel the waters of the Missouri with the state record flathead catfish being caught near Riverside in 2015. In addition, a 99-pound blue catfish was caught the same weekend. Variety abounds, you can also catch fish such as sturgeon, several catfish species, carp, buffalo, sauger, hybrid striped bass that get washed in from Kansas reservoirs, and even crappie and white bass in the mouths of some streams.

**Flathead catfish** in excess of 40 pounds are available to those who are willing to venture out on the big river. Flatheads are caught fishing around brush piles, off the ends of the wing dikes or in the back eddies of the dykes. Flatheads prefer live bait but will take cut bait in the early spring. Green sunfish, bluegill and creek chubs work well, but bullheads are the best bait. **Blue catfish** are numerous and fish over 50 pounds are not uncommon. Blue catfish will take a variety of baits from live fish to cut bait. In the evening, blue catfish often feed on the shallow flats between wing dikes, on the upstream side of trail dikes, and on submerged sandbars on the inside of river bends. During the day they will often be found in woody cover along the banks. They can also be caught in the deep holes off the ends of the wing dikes during cooler months. Some of the best bait is invasive carp. These invasive carp will jump in the boat if you drive behind a dike or near the mouth of a tributary. It is illegal to move live invasive carp, so euthanize them and place them immediately on ice if you get one. Trotlines and limb lines are used by many anglers to fish large stretches of the river. Don't forego rod and reel fishing though. Battling a large flathead or blue catfish on a rod in the swift Missouri River currents is a unique challenge. That means your tackle needs to be heavy. The minimum would be a heavy bass rod with 20-pound test line, but a heavy

catfish rod with at least 40-pound line is recommended.

There is also the chance of seeing an ancient fish should you catch a sturgeon. Be sure to release any sturgeon that you cannot positively identify as a **shovelnose sturgeon** as pallid and lake sturgeon are protected and must be released. Any sturgeon 30-inches or longer must be released. For help with sturgeon identification, please go to [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov). **Channel catfish** can be caught on traditional catfish baits and are found along cut banks between wing dykes, sand bars, and on shallow flats. Dough baits and worms can be good baits for **common carp** which are caught just about anywhere on the river. The best areas for carp have slower current and are shallow. One of the best things about fishing the river is you never know what you might catch. Walleye, sauger, hybrid striped bass, crappie and even the occasional northern pike have been reported.

Access to the river is good; you can normally access the Missouri River above Parkville from MDC's Schimmel City Access located on the lower Platte River. The boat ramp in Parkville provides excellent access to the river above downtown. Fishing in downtown Kansas City can provide a unique experience. This stretch is accessible by boat ramps at the old Riverfront Park just upstream of the Chouteau Bridge and at Kaw Point Access at the confluence of the Kansas River on the Kansas side. Below Kansas City, Sugar Creek maintains a boat ramp in LaBenite Park at highway 291 that is open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Missouri Department of Conservation has an access with a boat ramp on the Cooley Lake Conservation Area, about two miles east of Missouri City off Highway 210. There is also a boat ramp near Fort Osage in Sibley.

Regardless of where you are fishing on the Missouri River, you may encounter a tagged fish. You will find the tags on the back of the fish just below the dorsal fin. Should you catch a tagged fish, but want to release the fish, cut the tag off and call the number on the tag. Tags on catfish are worth \$25 or \$150, and the information you can provide to biologists about the fish's location, size, etc. can prove invaluable. An angler fishing in the Missouri River near downtown Kansas City will not experience crowds and possibly never see another boat all day. Those boating on the river should take a few precautions and use common sense when navigating and fishing the river. Keep your boat well maintained, avoid floating debris and wing dikes that stick out from the banks, and make sure to wear a life

jacket. Navigation maps can be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

## Missouri River (Lower)

(Saint Louis Region)

### Information

636-441-4554



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Freshwater Drum

### Prospects

The lower Missouri River continues to provide good fishing for catfish and other species. MDC sampling efforts in recent years indicate high numbers of 25 to 35 inch **blue catfish**. Anglers continue to report good catches, including trophy size fish in the 80 to 100 pound range. Blue catfish are found along current breaks near dike tips and notches, and on revetted shorelines with fairly swift current. Water temperature of 60-65 degrees F in spring is optimum for blue catfishing. Good baits for blue catfish include cut Asian carp, shad, skipjack herring, goldeye and live sunfish or goldfish. **Flathead catfish** surveys this past year produced plenty of 20 to 30 inch fish with a few up to 45 inches. Flathead catfish are found in moderate current around dikes, along revetted shorelines and on cutbanks, especially where woody cover is also present. Flathead catfish prefer live bait, such as sunfish and goldfish. **Channel catfish** cruise shallow water at night near sandbars. Also try fishing for them in slower moving water in side channels, near cutbanks, or above and below dikes. Channel catfish anglers use a wide variety of natural and prepared baits with success.

**Freshwater drum** and **buffalo** can be caught in a wide range of habitats on nightcrawlers, goldfish, and other baits. For something different, try bowfishing for non-game fish, such as **carp** and **gar**, in river sloughs and side channels.

Three species of sturgeon can be found in the lower Missouri River: **shovelnose**, **pallid** and **lake sturgeon**. All can be caught on worms, but the shovelnose sturgeon is the only species of the three that is legal to harvest. Anglers are encouraged to educate themselves on sturgeon identification, as pallid and shovelnose sturgeon are often confused. If you catch a sturgeon, please check it for a tag in

order to help provide valuable information to fisheries biologists. In recent years anglers have reported catching greater numbers of **lake sturgeon**. The increased catch is due to a state/federal effort to recover this endangered species. Lake sturgeon are a charismatic species - with a lifespan over 100 years and an adult size of 4 to 8 feet. If you are lucky enough to hook one of these large, powerful fish enjoy the fight, but be sure to release the fish promptly and unharmed. You may report your catch to your local MDC office to help biologist learn more about the habits of lake sturgeon.

Do not be discouraged from fishing the lower Missouri River if you don't own a boat. Great bank fishing can be found along the river at locations such as Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, Weldon Spring Conservation Area, St. Charles Riverfront, Washington Riverfront, and Herman Riverfront.

## Niangua River

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

### Prospects

Anglers can expect good **rainbow trout** and **brown trout** fishing in the White Ribbon Trout Area on Niangua River. Brown trout are stocked annually, and rainbow trout are stocked frequently throughout the year. The majority of **brown trout** should be in the 12-inch length range during 2025, with a few greater than 18 inches. There should be good numbers of rainbow trout up to 15 inches. Rainbow trout will continue to be stocked downstream from Bennett Spring Branch throughout the year. Flies, spinners, and small crankbaits work well for catching both brown and rainbow trout. **Smallmouth bass** and **goggle-eye** provide much of the fishing action in the portion of the Niangua River above and below the White Ribbon Trout Area near Bennett Spring. Information from the most recent fish surveys indicate that on average, about 25 percent of the smallmouth bass exceed the legal size of 12 inches, and more than 7 percent are greater than 15 inches. There are good numbers of goggle-eye in the 7-9 inch range with about 15 percent of the population greater than 9 inches. Crankbaits, plastic grubs, and worms and earthworms fished close to woody cover and boulders are good

producers. Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye are found around boulders and woody cover, especially when they are close to good current. **Largemouth bass** and **spotted/Kentucky bass** are more common in downstream reaches and in backwaters and eddies. Live bait, such as crayfish, minnows, and worms, are always a good bet. When using live bait, care should be taken to not introduce minnows and crayfish from other stream systems. Introductions of minnows and crayfish from different stream systems may upset the ecological balance of the Niangua. As always, the Niangua River is a great place to take kids fishing for sunfish. **Longear sunfish** and **bluegill** are plentiful throughout the river and are easy to catch with a bobber and hook baited with worms or crickets. Giggers can expect to find good numbers of nice-sized **suckers**.

## North Fork of the White River

(Ozark Region)

### Information

417-256-7161

### Best Bets

Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Smallmouth Bass

### Prospects

**Smallmouth bass** can be caught in good numbers throughout the North Fork of the White River. Most of the fish will be 12-15 inches. However, there are decent numbers of quality fish which exceed 15 inches. Jigs, crankbaits, and soft plastic baits are good choices for catching smallmouth bass (soft plastics cannot be used in the Blue Ribbon Trout Area). **Goggle-eye** also occur throughout the river, but anglers can expect lower catch rates after recent floods. These fish can be caught on the same type of lures as smallmouth, but generally smaller versions are more productive. Be sure to concentrate fishing efforts in and around aquatic vegetation, boulders, and rootwads.

In-stream and riparian habitat has been naturally changed by a record 1,000-year flood experienced in 2017. Anglers can expect to catch quality trout in a variety of lengths, but overall should expect significantly fewer numbers of trout, when compared to the pre-flood years, in 2025. Catch-and-release practices are recommended to help sustain trout numbers while the population recovers from the record flood. The Blue Ribbon Trout Area (BRTA) (from Rainbow Spring to Patrick Bridge Access), is still the best-bet for **rainbow trout**. Anglers will

continue to notice that the body condition of these fish is very good. Wooly buggers, pats rubber legs, and prince nymphs bounced along the bottom are traditionally good wet fly patterns, while Adams and elk hair caddis dry flies work well when fish are surface feeding. Crayfish and minnow imitating crankbaits as well as various spinners are also effective. The opportunity to catch **Brown trout** in the Red Ribbon Trout Area (RRTA), from Patrick Bridge to Norfolk Lake, has declined since the record flood in 2017. Anglers should expect the majority of brown trout to range from 12-15 inches, but also expect fewer numbers of brown trout, when compared to the pre-flood years, in 2025. Quality brown trout also migrate into the BRTA and can be pursued with streamers. To catch more brown trout, try fishing during the sunrise and sunset hours. Stocking of brown trout will continue in the spring and fall to provide anglers with quality fishing opportunities. Anglers can also expect more abundant numbers of black bass, striped bass, and other warm-water species migrating into the RRTA and BRTA due to the recent spring high water events and sustained high water Norfolk Lake levels throughout the summer.

### Driving Directions

On the North Fork, MDC maintains the Hebron, Blair Bridge, and Patrick Bridge accesses in Douglas and Ozark counties within the Ozark Region. For directions to these accesses visit [mdc.mo.gov/atlas](http://mdc.mo.gov/atlas).

## Osage Fork of the Gasconade River

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-895-6880

### Best Bets

Smallmouth Bass, Northern Rock Bass

### Prospects

**Goggle-eye** and **smallmouth bass** are the most sought-after fish on the Osage Fork. Anglers should take note that there is a Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area on the Osage Fork of the Gasconade River, from Skyline Drive Bridge (in Laclede County near Orla) to its confluence with the Gasconade River. **Goggle-eye** are often found around boulders and rootwads near submerged aquatic vegetation or stands of water willow along the shoreline. The most recent fish surveys show good numbers of goggle-eye, the majority are in the 7-9-inch range, with about 70 percent of the population

greater than the statewide minimum length limit of 7 inches and about 30 percent over 8 inches. **Smallmouth bass** are usually found near rootwads and boulders that are close to fast current. Anglers can expect good smallmouth bass fishing in 2025, with good numbers in the 12-15-inch range. Approximately 20 percent of the smallmouth bass population is greater than 12 inches and more than 10 percent are greater than 15 inches. Preferred artificial baits include crayfish-colored crankbaits, soft plastic jigs and worms fished around logs and boulders. Live bait (crayfish and worms) also work well. When using live bait, care should be taken to not introduce minnows and crayfish from other stream systems. Introductions of minnows and crayfish from different stream systems may upset the ecological balance of the Osage Fork. **Largemouth bass** are present in the slower flowing water, especially around stands of vegetation. Plastic worms fished Texas-style work well for largemouth bass. **Flathead catfish** and **channel catfish** can be caught using limb lines, set lines and trotlines in the deeper pools. Live sunfish usually work best for flathead catfish; nightcrawlers, chicken liver and stinkbaits are good for channel catfish. **Longear sunfish** provide plenty of action for the whole family. They are especially fun for beginning anglers because of their willingness, under almost all conditions, to take very small artificial lures or a hook baited with a worm or cricket. For giggers willing to brave the cold, the Osage Fork clears up by late-November, and there are plenty of **suckers** to provide good action.

## Platte River

(Kansas City Region)

### Information

816-622-0900

### Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Blue Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Common Carp

### Prospects

The Platte River meanders through Platte County and is full of snags and standing timber. Flooding from 2019 and 2020 should have allowed more fish to be produced and those fish should be getting good harvest size. However, the recent prolonged drought has drastically reduced the accessibility of the Platte River in places. **Channel catfish** and **flathead catfish** are common throughout the Platte and large flatheads are caught each year. **Blue catfish** are also present in the river and fish over 40 pounds are

possible. Blue catfish are most common in the lower 10 miles of the river but are becoming more common further upstream each year. Blue catfish numbers in the lower 3 miles of the river are higher in late spring. Channel and blue catfish take a variety of live and prepared baits. Flathead catfish prefer live fish except in the early spring when feeding on winter killed shad. Flathead catfish prefer woody cover and fishermen should target brush when fishing for them. If you can't get live fish, a large hook full of nightcrawlers or crayfish can often entice a flathead catfish too. **Common carp**, **buffalo**, **freshwater drum**, and **gar** are also common in the Platte River and traditional baits work well. Pay attention when boating, the bighead and silver carp inhabit the river and can jump into your boat. Anglers can use bighead and silver carp as bait if the fish are dead. Both must be euthanized or returned to the river immediately after being caught or after they jump in your boat. The Platte River is one of our most accessible rivers. The boat ramp at Schimmel City Access also allows access to the Missouri River just two miles downstream. Sharps Station Access is the uppermost boat ramp. There are also two boat ramps at the Platte Falls Conservation Area near Platte City. The ramps share the same parking area, but one ramp is three miles downstream from the other. There is a big meander or loop in the river, so you can put in and take out from the same parking lot. If you look at this area on a map the river forms a "duck head" as it meanders from one ramp to the next. This makes an excellent short float or half-day fishing trip since only one vehicle is needed. Bank access is also available at several locations including the Platte Falls Conservation Area, which has over 10 miles of river frontage and at Humphrey Access downstream of Platte City. The old boat slide at Humphrey Access has been damaged by flooding and should not be used until repair or replacement has occurred. Union Mill Access, west of Edgerton, is located on a stretch of the river that is able to be waded during the summer months.

### Driving Directions

There are three boat ramp accesses on the Platte River. Schimmel City Access (near Farley), Platte Falls (The Duck Head) and Sharps Station (off Interurban Road).

## Salt River - Downstream of Mark Twain Lake

(Northeast Region)

## Information

573-248-2530

## Best Bets

Channel Catfish, Common Carp, Flathead Catfish, Smallmouth Bass

## Prospects

The Salt River below Mark Twain Lake is separated into two sections: the Reregulation Pool and the mainstem Salt River. The Reregulation Pool is most popular for **crappie**, **largemouth**

**bass**, **flathead catfish**, and **channel catfish**. There are two access points to the 9-mile-long pool. The Warren G. See South Spillway Recreation Area has a concrete boat ramp at the upper end of the pool, just below Clarence Cannon Dam. Hunter/Fisherman Access #70 is near the downstream end of the pool and has a concrete boat ramp and gravel parking lot. Bluff View Recreation Area provides access immediately downstream of the reregulation dam. A concrete boat ramp is available, and the area is also popular with shoreline anglers. A variety of species are present here, including **flathead catfish**, **carp**, **white bass** and the occasional 20 inch plus **walleye**. **Lake sturgeon**, catches have increased in recent years due to state efforts to recover this endangered species. If you are fortunate enough to observe or catch lake sturgeon, please check the fish for any tags, estimate its length, and note the location before returning it to the water unharmed. Additionally, contact your local MDC office with the information you've gathered. Snagging is prohibited from the dam downstream to the Highway A bridge. Bowfishing is prohibited in the "no boating" zone but is legal downstream of that area.

Public access to the rest of the Salt River is limited to Indian Camp Access and on the Ted Shanks Conservation Area just two miles upstream of the confluence with the Mississippi River. At Indian Camp Access, **smallmouth bass** can be common, but most fish will be less than 12 inches long. Anglers report catching smallmouth bass up to three pounds, but those are less common. **Flathead catfish**, **channel catfish**, and **common carp** are also popular in this reach. Giggers like this reach as they pursue **buffalo**, **redhorse suckers**, and other non-game species during the fall giggering season. Anglers fishing the Salt River from Ted Shanks Conservation Area are more likely to pursue **flathead catfish**, **channel catfish**, and **common carp**. **Sauger** and **crappie** are also present in this

reach in the spring. Bowfishers pursuing **bighead** and **silver carp** will find fast action from mid-summer through the fall.

## Driving Directions

Contact the US Army Corps of Engineers at Mark Twain Lake (573-735-4097) for directions to the Reregulation Pool ramps. The following are directions to three access points to the mainstem portion of the Salt River: Bluff View Recreation Area - From New London, take Highway A west 9.4 miles. Indian Camp Access - From New London, take Highway 61 north across Salt River, then Route O east to the access. Ted Shanks Conservation Area - From Hannibal, take Highway 79 south 17 miles, then Route TT east to the area. Once on the area, turn right for three miles, right for 0.9 miles, then right to the boat ramp.

## Spring Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)

(Ozark Region)

## Information

417-256-7161

## Best Bets

Rainbow Trout

## Prospects

Spring Creek, located on U. S. Forest Service property around Highway J in Phelps County, is best when fished from January until early summer. **Rainbow trout** migrate downstream from private property after the winter spawn and fish of all sizes can be caught. Anglers may find trophy rainbow trout in this section of river, but the population ebbs and flows with floods and time of year. 2024 was an off-year for sampling, but 2023 saw a good number of quality fish on Forest Service owned sections of stream, where most were larger than 14 inches. When typically fishing for naturally-spawned rainbow trout, anglers can expect fishing for long periods of time without seeing fish; however, their patience can be rewarded with rainbow trout upwards of 24 inches (sneaking up on habitats and being quiet is key). Trout anglers should concentrate on the downstream end of riffles/runs around deep holes with woody debris. During the summer, anglers should also look for (or feel) small spring seeps as fish seem to prefer these cooler refuges on the public portion of the creek. The average size of these naturally-spawned rainbow trout caught is 8 inches.

## Driving Directions

Take Hwy J exit of I-44 in near Pulaski/Phelps county line. Head south on Hwy J and turn just before Spring Creek Bridge on a Forest Service Road.

## St. Francis River (below Wappapello Lake)

(Southeast Region)

## Information

573-290-5730

## Best Bets

Crappie, White, Largemouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Bluegill, Flathead Catfish, Channel Catfish, Paddlefish

## Prospects

Fishing for **spotted bass** and **largemouth bass** is good for a few miles below Wappapello Dam and fair in the remainder of the un-channelized portion of the river between the dam and Kennett (Hwy. 84). Below the dam, good numbers of 15 to 18-inch bass are present. Spotted Bass are more common from Kennett (Hwy. 84) to the Arkansas state line, with good numbers of fish up to 15 inches.

There are many 6-8 inch **bluegill** for several miles downstream of Wappapello Dam. Fair numbers of 6-8 inch Bluegill are present throughout the remainder of the un-channelized portion of the river.

Trotlines and limblines should produce nice stringers of **channel catfish**. Anglers can also expect to catch a fair number of **flathead catfish**.

Abundant **crappie** can be caught directly below the dam in the spring, with some fish reaching desirable sizes. Large **buffalo** and **gar** can be encountered anywhere on the river.

**White bass** and **paddlefish** can be abundant in the spring below the dam depending on water levels. For additional information pertaining to the St. Francis River, please call (573) 290-5858 ext. 4434 or email Dave Knuth at [dave.knuth@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:dave.knuth@mdc.mo.gov).

## Trout Parks

### Bennett Spring State Park

(Southwest Region)

#### Information

417-532-4418



Handicap Accessible

#### Best Bets

Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout

#### Prospects

The 2025 trout season should be good one with daily stockings of **rainbow trout** at Bennett Spring State Park from March 1 through October 31.

Anglers may notice some construction activities during their visit this season as the hatchery continues renovation activities. These renovations will breathe new life into the hatchery as certain infrastructure and components are replaced and renovated. During the 2025 season, the hatchery complex will be unavailable for public use. This includes feeding the fish and hatchery tours. Thank you for your patience during this time as we work on these much-needed improvements.

There are three fishing zones within Bennett Spring State Park. Zone 1 runs from the Hatchery Dam upstream to the spring area. Only flies are permitted in Zone 1. Zone 2 runs from the hatchery dam downstream to the Whistle Bridge. Only flies and artificial lures are permitted in Zone 2. Zone 3 runs from the Whistle Bridge downstream to the Niangua River. Only soft plastic bait, natural and scented bait are permitted in Zone 3. All flies and artificial lures are prohibited in Zone 3, even if natural bait or scent has been added.

Each year the park hosts special events that encourage angling as a family activity and provide novice anglers the opportunity to experience trout fishing. Kids Free Fishing Day takes place on the first Saturday in May. For 2025, the event will be held on Saturday, May 3rd. This is a great opportunity for the whole family to come out and spend the day fishing at the trout park. All children age 15 and under fish for free during this annual event. There will be a special kids only fishing area to ensure that they have a successful trip. This area will extend from the hatchery outlet in Zone 2 to the Suzy Hole in Zone 3. This area will be marked with signs and will be patrolled to make sure that children

are the only anglers fishing in that area. Children need to observe the zone regulations, length limits for **brown trout**, and daily limits. There will be streamside volunteers to assist participants with knot tying, lure selection, and fishing advice. There will be several activities for the children throughout the event. All anglers must abide by normal fishing hours for May, which are 6:30 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Anglers can fish during the Statewide Free Fishing Days which are held in June on the first Saturday and Sunday following the first Monday. In 2025, this will be June 7th and 8th. On these two days, no daily tag or fishing license is required to fish in the park. More great fishing events happening at Bennett Spring in 2025 include Veteran's Fishing Day held on Saturday, April 12th and also Ladies Free Fishing Day held on Saturday, September 27th. Contact the hatchery for more information about these events.

Anglers also have the opportunity to catch and release trout during the winter fishing season. Bennett Spring Trout Park is open for catch-and-release fishing only from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from the second Friday in November thru the second Monday in February. The last day of the previous catch-and-release season is February 10, 2025. The season beginning in the fall of 2025 will start on November 14, 2025 and end on February 9, 2026. During catch-and-release season, only flies may be used and all fish must be released unharmed immediately.

#### Driving Directions

12 miles west of Lebanon on Highway 64.

### Maramec Spring Park

(Ozark Region)

#### Information

573-265-7801



Handicap Accessible

#### Best Bets

Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout

#### Prospects

The Maramec Spring Park 2024 trout season will provide good fishing opportunities with the daily stockings of **rainbow trout** from March 1 through October 31.

Fishing is allowed in the Maramec Spring Branch downstream from the fish sanctuary to the Maramec Red Ribbon Trout Management Area. All artificial

and natural baits are permitted in this zone. The daily limit at Maramec Spring Park is four trout with a fifteen-inch length limit on **brown trout**. The statewide possession limit is 8 trout.

Every year Maramec Spring Park will host special events that provide anglers the opportunity to experience trout fishing. Kid's Free Fishing Day will be held on May 17th. This is a great opportunity for kids to come out and spend the day fishing at Maramec Spring Park. All children aged 15 and under fish for free. A portion of the spring branch will be reserved as a special kid's only fishing area. This area will be marked with signs and will be patrolled to make sure that children are the only anglers fishing in that area. Children need to observe the zone regulations, length limits for brown trout, and daily limits. There will be volunteers to assist the kids and other activities for the children.

Other fishing events at Maramec Spring Park include the Statewide Free Fishing Days which are on June 7th and 8th. On these two days, no daily tag or fishing license is required to fish in the park. Veteran's Fishing Day will be on Saturday, June 7th and Women's Fishing Day will be on Saturday, September 13th. Contact the hatchery for more information about these events.

Anglers can catch and release trout during the winter fishing season. Maramec Spring Park is open for catch-and-release fishing from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. from the second Friday in November thru the second Monday in February seven days a week. During the catch-and-release season, only flies may be used, and all fish must be released unharmed immediately. Fishing is only allowed in the Maramec Spring Branch downstream from the fish sanctuary to the Maramec Red Ribbon Trout Management Area.

### Driving Directions

6 miles SE of Saint James on Highway 8

### Montauk State Park

(Ozark Region)

### Information

573-548-2585



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

The Montauk State Park 2025 trout season will provide good fishing opportunities with the daily stockings of **rainbow trout** from March 1st through October 31st.

There are three fishing zones at Montauk State Park. The flies only zone is from the Mill Dam upstream to Montauk Springs. Only flies are permitted in this zone. The artificial and natural bait zone includes all the spring branch below the CCC Spillway and from the Mill Pool Dam downstream to the lower park boundary. All artificial and natural baits are permitted in this zone. The catch and release zone includes Montauk Lake and its overflow area, and the short section of the spring branch above the CCC Spillway upstream to the hatchery raceways. Only flies are permitted in this zone and no possession of fish is allowed in this area. The daily limit at Montauk is 4 trout with a fifteen-inch length limit on brown trout. The statewide possession limit is 8 trout. Montauk State Park host special fishing events that provide anglers the opportunity to experience trout fishing. Kids Free Fishing Day will be held on Saturday, May 3rd. This is a great opportunity for kids to come out and spend the day fishing at Montauk. All children aged 15 and under fish for free. There will be a special kid's only fishing area from the CCC Spillway downstream to the Social Hole. This area will be marked with signs and will be patrolled to make sure that children are the only anglers fishing in that area. Children need to observe the zone regulations, length limits for **brown trout**, and daily limits. There will be volunteers to assist the kids and other activities for the children.

Other fishing events at Montauk State Park include Statewide Free Fishing Days on Saturday, June 7th and Sunday, June 8th. On these two days, no daily tag or fishing license is required to fish in the park. The Summer's End Kids Free Fishing Day is on Saturday, August 9th, and Veteran's Fishing Day is on Saturday, September 6th. Contact Montauk Hatchery at 573-548-2585 for more information about these events.

Anglers can catch and release trout during the winter fishing season. Montauk State Park is always open for catch-and-release fishing from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday from the second Friday in November through the second Monday in February. During the catch-and-release season, only flies may be used, and all fish must be released unharmed immediately. Fishing is only allowed upstream from the old low water bridge just below the ADA fishing pier in loop 3 of the campground.

## Driving Directions

Montauk State Park is located in Dent County, 22 miles southwest of Salem MO and 22 miles southeast of Licking MO. From Salem, take Highway 32 west, 11 miles to Highway 119. Take Highway 119 south, 11 miles to Montauk State Park. From Licking MO, take Highway 32 east, 11 miles to Highway 119. Take Highway 119 south, 11 miles to Montauk State Park.

## Roaring River State Park

(Southwest Region)

### Information

417-847-2430



Handicap Accessible

### Best Bets

Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout

### Prospects

Anglers can look forward to good fishing at Roaring River for both **rainbow trout** and limited numbers of **brown trout**. The park is divided into three zones: Zone 1 from the hatchery to the mouth of Dry Hollow Creek is flies, artificial lures, and soft plastic (scented or unscented) bait only; Zone 2 from the mouth of Dry Hollow Creek to the posted sign upstream from the old dam in campground 3 is flies only; Zone 3 is from the posted sign upstream from the old dam to the park boundary and flies, artificial lures, soft plastic bait, and natural or scented bait may be used.

The winter catch-and-release season will run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday through Monday from the second Friday in November through the second Monday in February. Trout will be stocked periodically throughout the winter catch-and-release season. Winter catch-and-release fishing is open from the first hole adjacent to the hatchery to the park boundary.

Roaring River State Park will host two Kid's Fishing Days during this year. These will be on Saturday, May 17 and Saturday, August 16. These events are free to children age 15 and younger. An area of the stream will be reserved for kids, and numerous trout will be stocked throughout the day. Volunteers will be on hand to assist kids with rigging, baits, tackle, etc. There will be various contests and drawings for prizes. Free classes related to fishing and the outdoors will be offered, and prizes will be awarded by a large drawing to kids who attend at least three

classes during the event. Free hot dogs, chips, and soda will be available from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Downstream of the park, Roaring River Conservation Area provides additional opportunity for anglers to pursue trout. There is a good population of trout in the lower section of Roaring River below the park, with a density of about seventy trout per mile. Look for pools and current breaks such as boulders, trees/root wads, and outside bends where trout tend to congregate. The water is usually very shallow and clear and the trout are very wary. Light line and approaching good habitats carefully is usually necessary for success.

### Driving Directions

Seven miles south of Cassville on Highway 112.

## Bragging Rights Provided by the Master Angler Program

The Master Angler Award recognizes the accomplishments of anglers who catch memorable fish in Missouri. To qualify, fish must meet the minimum weight or length requirements that are larger than the average in Missouri.

Complete the application form and receive a certificate that bears your name, the Director's signature, the species and size of fish. This award allows you to forever defend your status as a Master Angler in Missouri.



Go to [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJj](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJj) and use the online application to create your certificate. You can then screen capture the image and drop it into a document for printing, or email the requested information to [Fishing.Report@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Fishing.Report@mdc.mo.gov) to have a certificate mailed to you.

## MO Fishing App

### “Did You Know?”



There are tools that the Conservation Department offers to help you get hooked on fishing.

The free “MO Fishing” app will help plan your next fishing trip. Search for nearby bodies of water and view whether it has fish attractors, boat ramps, parking lots, restrooms available for public use. You can also view a fish identification guide, the current fishing report and fishing prospects, and purchase your fishing permit. Try it now!

**MO Fishing:** [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zoh](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zoh)

# Attention Anglers

## Help Protect Missouri's Endangered Sturgeon

There are three species of sturgeon in Missouri. The pallid and lake sturgeon are endangered and need to be protected. Pallid and lake sturgeon are illegal to possess and must be returned unharmed to the water immediately after being caught.

### How can you help?

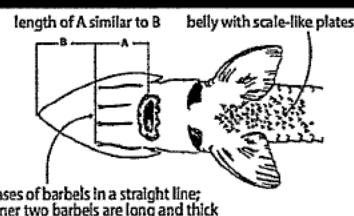
1. **KNOW YOUR STURGEON!** Learn how to distinguish the three species from one another.
2. Report your catch or sightings of pallid and lake sturgeon to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Report any sturgeon that is tagged and the tag number.

#### Shovelnose sturgeon

Shovelnose sturgeon and endangered pallid sturgeon are similar.



- reddish-brown or buff color
- found throughout Missouri and Mississippi rivers

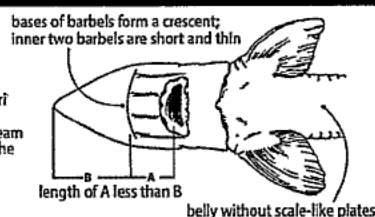


#### ENDANGERED Pallid sturgeon

Endangered species: If caught, return unharmed to water immediately.

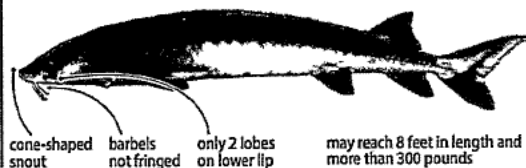


- grayish-white color
- found in the Missouri River and in the Mississippi downstream from the mouth of the Illinois River

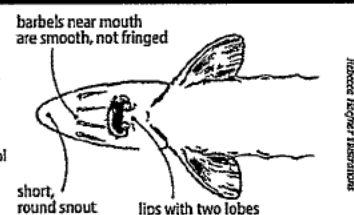


#### ENDANGERED Lake sturgeon

Endangered species: If caught, return unharmed to water immediately.



- sides and back range from dark slate to light brown or yellowish-olive; white belly
- found throughout Missouri and Mississippi rivers



**All pallid sturgeon and lake sturgeon must be released  
Unharmed immediately after being caught.**

For more information or to report sightings of pallid and lake sturgeons, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation  
Central Regional Office and Conservation Research Center  
3500 Gans Road  
Columbia, MO 65201  
573-815-7900





# Didymo

## Background, Life History

Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), commonly referred to as "rock snot," is an alga native to the northern parts of Europe and North America. Didymo has adapted to a wide range of water quality conditions. It has demonstrated increased tolerance across a variety of habitats and has been spreading since the 1980s. The introduction of didymo can alter the entire stream ecosystem. Didymo grows to create extensive white, beige or brown (not green) underwater carpets in moderately flowing freshwater streams that are clean and cool with stable flows. Although not in Missouri at the time of this writing, procedures are being put in place to minimize the risk of this invasive being introduced to Missouri's waterways.

Missouri's trout streams provide ideal conditions for didymo to flourish. Optimal conditions for didymo include constant velocities of moderate to high flow, shallow water up to six feet deep, plenty of sunshine, cool water temperatures, and waters low in nutrients and high in levels of dissolved oxygen with pH levels near 7.

Even though didymo is one of the largest freshwater diatoms, the individual cells cannot be seen with the naked eye. Only one cell is needed to establish a colony. Newly established didymo colonies are characterized by small, thick, brown bubbles on rocks. It can appear slimy, but actually feels like wet cotton or scratchy wool. The longer the colony persists, the longer the filaments become. These filaments detach and float downstream like a flotilla of tissue paper, thereby spreading the invasive organism.



Fish and Game Star Zedlitz

## How Didymo Spreads

Felt-soled waders and wading boots, worn by many trout anglers, appear to be a likely pathway for the spread of didymo. Felt soles are porous and hold moisture for days. A single cell of didymo can survive in the sole of the boot. Didymo can then be introduced unknowingly to the next stream the angler visits. In addition to waders and angling equipment, canoes, kayaks and other watercraft are also considered pathways for didymo to spread.



Dr. Russell Rhodes

## Missouri Distribution

Didymo is not currently found in Missouri. However, didymo is as close as the White River, just south of Missouri's border.





Use a wash station to prevent the spread of didymo.



Didymo feels coarse, not slimy like many other algae.



Didymo infested streambeds can alter aquatic invertebrate communities.

## Impacts

Didymo can alter the entire stream ecosystem. Didymo can create extensive blooms by attaching its stalks to rocks or plants and covering the stream bottom. Didymo cells secrete a mucuslike substance to create a firm hold on substrates and to help keep the alga moist. Changes in the stream can be extensive and can include an increase in suspended organic material, fluctuating pH levels, and a change in macroinvertebrate population structures. Fish populations may suffer as the habitat (interstitial spaces between rocks) for macroinvertebrates (especially the pollution-sensitive taxa—caddisfly, stonefly and mayfly) is covered by the algal colonies, reducing preferred food supplies. The resulting loss of quality habitat can also lead to a shift to pollution-tolerant macroinvertebrates like midges, leeches, etc.

Once didymo is established in an area, wading is hazardous due to slippery, algae-covered rocks. The spread of didymo can also affect the fishing industry by clogging water intakes of boat motors and interfering with fishing gear and lines. Excessive blooms of didymo can render fishing impossible, with devastating economic consequences.

## Control

Once established, didymo is difficult to control or eradicate. If you will be using your waders and other gear in another

body of water without sufficient time to completely dry them, please take the following precautions to prevent transporting didymo to new waters.

- **Check** all gear and equipment after use and remove any visible algae. If you notice algae on your equipment at a later time, do not dispose of the algae by putting it down a drain. Dispose of it in the trash.
- **Clean** all equipment with a 2 percent household bleach solution, 5 percent saltwater solution, or dishwashing detergent. Allow all equipment to stay in contact with the solution for at least three minutes. Soak all soft items, such as felt-soled waders and life jackets, in the solution for at least 20 minutes.
- **Dry** all equipment in sunlight for at least 48 hours.
- Consider replacing felt-soled waders with a new, environmentally sensitive alternative.

It is important that Missourians work together to prevent the spread of didymo. Please share this information with others.

## For Additional Information

[www.epa.gov/region8/water/didymosphenia/](http://www.epa.gov/region8/water/didymosphenia/)

[www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatics/didymo.shtml](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatics/didymo.shtml)

[www.fort.usgs.gov/news/news\\_story.asp?WebID=100528](http://www.fort.usgs.gov/news/news_story.asp?WebID=100528)

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

For more information or to report a population, contact your local Missouri Department of Conservation office, e mail [WildlifeDivision@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:WildlifeDivision@mdc.mo.gov), or write:

Didymo  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Invasive Species Coordinator  
P.O. Box 180  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180



W00057 6/2011


 Invasive species

# Hydrilla

## Harms Fish, Wildlife, and Economy

Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) is a federally listed noxious weed that can harm our aquatic resources. It chokes out local aquatic plant communities, interferes with boating and fishing, clogs water intake systems, and adversely changes the dynamics of fish populations.

Hydrilla not only hinders aquatic life, it can also help spread disease to waterfowl and raptors. Hydrilla has been linked to avian vacuolar myelinopathy (AVM). It serves as a host plant to a species of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) that produces a novel neurotoxin linked to the disease. Studies have shown that removing hydrilla can eliminate the AVM deaths to birds in that area.

Hydrilla's impacts reach farther than just ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. Many local economies in Missouri will be devastated when people are no longer able to fish, float, and enjoy nearby streams and lakes. If hydrilla infests source water supplies, drinking water and hydro power generation will be more costly, which means higher water and electric bills.

## How it Spreads

Hydrilla can quickly spread through ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and even streams. It only takes one small piece of plant to start new growth. Hydrilla can be spread by:

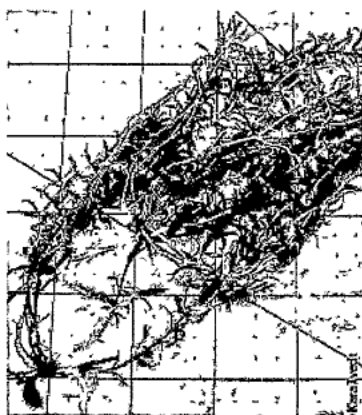
- Fragments "hitching a ride" on boat trailers, fishing gear, waterfowl, and wildlife
- Tubers being swallowed by birds and dropped in new locations
- Wildlife and humans relocating fish and plants from infested waters
- Aquarium dumping

Hydrilla has several different methods of propagation including fragmentation, tubers, turions, and seed dispersal. A plant fragment containing at least one leaf whorl has the potential to start a new plant. The more whorls on the fragment, the more likely it will succeed. Tubers are underground growth structures. Under ideal conditions, approximately 6,000 tubers can be produced per square meter. Some hydrilla tubers can stay viable in the soil for at least four years or up to 10 years. Turions are buds that detach from the plant and overwinter on the surface of the sediment. Turions only survive about eight months, but this is long enough for them to produce new plants the following spring. Seed dispersal actually plays a minor role in new plant generation. The persistence of this invasive plant's tubers and multiple methods of propagation have caused experts to label the plant as the "perfect weed."



## Missouri Infestations

The first documented sighting of hydrilla in Missouri was in 2012 in a private pond in northeastern Greene County. Since then it has been found in Dallas, Warren, and St. Louis counties.



A young hydrilla plant



Hydrilla hitching a ride on trailer



University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants

### Please Help Control It

Hydrilla can live in any size or type of water body. From backyard water gardens to large lakes and streams, nothing is immune from hydrilla's impact. Water depth and clarity are not deterrents. Hydrilla needs very little light and grows in areas where many native aquatic plants cannot. In clear water, hydrilla has been found at depths of more than 30 feet. Hydrilla can grow up to an inch per day.

Once established, hydrilla is difficult to eradicate. Due to the re-sprouting of tubers in the mud, it takes at least four to five years of successful, season-long control to rid a site of hydrilla. In most cases, control means several applications of expensive aquatic herbicides throughout the growing season each year. Prevention is crucial. Please take the following precautions to prevent the spread of hydrilla.

- **Clean:** When leaving a body of water, remove all mud, plants, fish, or animals before transporting your equipment. Thoroughly clean all fishing gear including boats and trailers after each trip.
- **Drain:** Eliminate any water from your equipment before leaving the area you visited. Always drain water from boats, motors, live wells, etc.
- **Dry:** Dry anything that comes in contact with water.

For more information on cleaning options, go to [protectyourwaters.net/prevention](http://protectyourwaters.net/prevention). Also, never release plants, fish, or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water. This includes live bait and aquarium contents.

### Learn to Identify Hydrilla

- A submerged, rooted plant with whorled leaf pattern with 3 to 8 leaves per whorl, mostly whorled in fives.
- Leaves are narrow and have serrated margins.
- Leaves are roughly 2 to 4 mm wide and 10 to 20 mm long.
- Branching is normally limited until the plant is close to the water's surface.
- Leaf mid-rib is often red.
- Most reliable identification is the potato-like tuber attached to the roots.

### Background

Hydrilla is a submerged aquatic plant that is native to the Indian subcontinent and was introduced to the United States in the early 1950s, more than likely through the aquarium trade. Hydrilla has spread from Florida to Maine on the Eastern Seaboard and is even found in the state of Washington. At least 29 states including Missouri are dealing with introduced populations of hydrilla.



### For More Information

[mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/hydrilla](http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/hydrilla)

[mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov)  
For more information or to report a hydrilla sighting, contact your local Missouri Department of Conservation office, located at [mo.gov/1Z4H0Po](http://mo.gov/1Z4H0Po), or write

Hydrilla  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Fisheries Division  
PO Box 180  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180



FIS014 10/2015

## Best Bets

### Blue Catfish

- Hunnewell Lake
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Long Branch Lake
- Mark Twain Lake
- Mississippi River (upper)
- Missouri River (Kansas City area)
- Missouri River (lower)
- Platte River
- Truman Lake

### Bluegill

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Binder Lake
- Blind Pony Lake
- Crowder State Park Lake
- Davidson-Paris Lake
- Happy Holler Lake
- Indian Creek Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Lake Jacomo
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Lake Remembrance
- Lawson City Lake
- Manito Lake
- North Bethany City Reservoir
- Perry County Lake
- Rt. J Reservoir
- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes
- Savannah City Reservoir
- Shawnee Trail Conservation Area
- Sterling Price Community Lake
- Table Rock Lake
- Valley Water Mill Lake

### Brown Trout

- Bennett Spring State Park
- Capps Creek
- Current River (upper)
- Lake Taneycomo
- Montauk State Park
- North Fork of the White River
- Roaring River State Park

### Chain Pickerel

- Current River (middle)
- Eleven Point River
- Sims Valley Lake

### Channel Catfish

- Atkinson Lake (Schell-Osage CA)
- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Big River
- Binder Lake
- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Blind Pony Lake
- Blue Springs Lake
- Bourbeuse River
- Crowder State Park Lake
- Edwin A. Pape Lake
- Forest Lake - Thousand Hills State Park
- Gasconade River (Phelps/Pulaski County)
- Happy Holler Lake
- Harrison County Lake
- Hazel Hill Lake
- Higginsville City Lake
- Hunnewell Lake
- Indian Creek Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Kansas City Urban Fishing Lakes
- Lake Jacomo
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Lake Paho
- Lake Remembrance
- Lawson City Lake
- Limpp Lake
- Little Compton Lake
- Long Branch Lake
- Longview Lake
- Manito Lake
- Maple Leaf Lake
- Mark Twain Lake
- Meramec River
- Mississippi River (upper)
- Missouri River (Kansas City area)
- Missouri River (Lower)
- Mozingo Lake
- Nodaway County Lake
- North Bethany City Reservoir
- Platte River
- Pony Express Lake
- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes

- Salt River - Downstream of Mark Twain Lake
- Savannah City Reservoir
- Shawnee Trail Conservation Area
- Sims Valley Lake
- Smithville Lake
- Stockton Lake
- Towell Lake
- Unionville City Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake
- Willow Brook Lake

## Common Carp

- Blue Springs Lake
- Limpp Lake
- Long Branch Lake
- Longview Lake
- Missouri River (Kansas City area)
- Platte River
- Pony Express Lake
- Salt River - Downstream of Mark Twain Lake

## Crappie, Black

- Binder Lake
- Blind Pony Lake
- Blue Springs Lake
- Bull Shoals Lake
- Che-Ru Lake
- DiSalvo Lake
- Fellows Lake
- Happy Holler Lake
- Harrison County Lake
- Hazel Hill Lake
- Hunnewell Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Lake Showme
- Mark Twain Lake
- Norfolk Lake
- Pomme de Terre Reservoir
- Savannah City Reservoir
- Stockton Lake
- Truman Lake
- Unionville City Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake

## Crappie, White

- Atkinson Lake (Schell-Osage CA)

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Binder Lake
- Blind Pony Lake
- Blue Springs Lake
- Bull Shoals Lake
- Che-Ru Lake
- DiSalvo Lake
- Fellows Lake
- Harrison County Lake
- Hunnewell Lake
- Indian Creek Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Lake Jacomo
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Longview Lake
- Mark Twain Lake
- Mozingo Lake
- Nodaway County Lake
- Norfolk Lake
- Pomme de Terre Reservoir
- Pony Express Lake
- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes
- Savannah City Reservoir
- Smithville Lake
- Stockton Lake
- Thomas Hill Reservoir
- Truman Lake
- Unionville City Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake

## Flathead Catfish

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Blue Springs Lake
- Che-Ru Lake
- Edwin A. Pape Lake
- Higginsville City Lake
- Lake Jacomo
- Longview Lake
- Meramec River
- Mississippi River (upper)
- Missouri River (Kansas City area)
- Missouri River (Lower)
- Platte River
- Salt River - Downstream of Mark Twain Lake
- Smithville Lake

## **Freshwater Drum**

- Meramec River
- Mississippi River (upper)
- Missouri River (Lower)

## **Golden Redhorse**

- Bourbeuse River
- Current River (lower)
- Meramec River

## **Grass Carp**

- Manito Lake

## **Hybrid Striped Bass (Wiper; Whiterock Bass)**

- Blue Springs Lake
- Hamilton City Reservoir
- Limpp Lake
- Little Compton Lake
- Long Branch Lake
- Nodaway County Lake
- Perry County Lake
- Thomas Hill Reservoir
- Truman Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake
- Willow Brook Lake

## **Largemouth Bass**

- Atkinson Lake (Schell-Osage CA)
- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Big Piney River (Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area)
- Big River
- Binder Lake
- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Blind Pony Lake
- Blue Springs Lake
- Bourbeuse River
- Bull Shoals Lake
- Che-Ru Lake
- DiSalvo Lake,
- Edwin A. Pape Lake
- Fellows Lake
- Forest Lake - Thousand Hills State Park
- Gasconade River (Phelps/Pulaski County)

- Hamilton City Reservoir
- Happy Holler Lake
- Harrison County Lake
- Hazel Creek Lake
- Hazel Hill Lake
- Higginsville City Lake
- Hunnewell Lake
- Indian Creek Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Lake Jacomo
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Lake Paho
- Lake Showme
- Lake Springfield
- Lake Taneycomo
- Lawson City Lake
- Limpp Lake
- Little Compton Lake
- Longview Lake
- Manito Lake
- Maple Leaf Lake
- Mark Twain Lake
- Mozingo Lake
- Nodaway County Lake
- Norfolk Lake
- North Bethany City Reservoir
- Perry County Lake
- Pomme de Terre Reservoir
- Pony Express Lake
- Rt. J Reservoir
- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes
- Savannah City Reservoir
- Shawnee Trail Conservation Area
- Sims Valley Lake
- Smithville Lake
- Sterling Price Community Lake
- Stockton Lake
- Table Rock Lake
- Towell Lake
- Unionville City Lake
- Valley Water Mill Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake

## **Muskellunge**

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Fellows Lake
- Hazel Creek Lake
- Pomme de Terre Reservoir

## Northern Hog Sucker

- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Current River (lower)
- Current River (middle)

## Northern Rock Bass

- Big Piney River (Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area)
- Big River
- Courtois Creek
- Current River (lower)
- Current River (middle)
- Eleven Point River
- Gasconade River (Laclede County)
- Hickory Creek
- Jacks Fork River
- Niangua River
- Osage Fork of the Gasconade River

## Paddlefish

- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Table Rock Lake
- Truman Lake

## Rainbow Trout

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Bennett Spring State Park
- Blue Springs Creek
- Capps Creek
- Current River (upper)
- Eleven Point River
- Hickory Creek
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Kansas City Urban Fishing Lakes
- Lake Taneycomo
- Little Piney Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)
- Maramec Spring Park
- Meramec River - Red Ribbon Area (Hwy 8 to Scott's Ford)
- Mill Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)
- Montauk State Park
- Niangua River
- North Fork of the White River
- Roaring River State Park

- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes
- Spring Creek (Blue Ribbon Trout Management Area)

## Redear Sunfish

- August A. Busch Memorial and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas
- Binder Lake
- Crowder State Park Lake
- DiSalvo Lake
- Happy Holler Lake
- Hazel Hill Lake
- Hunnewell Lake
- Indian Creek Lake
- James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area
- Lake Remembrance
- Lake Showme
- Lake Springfield
- Lake Taneycomo
- Manito Lake
- Maple Leaf Lake
- Perry County Lake
- St. Louis Urban Fishing Program Lakes
- Shawnee Trail Conservation Area
- Sims Valley Lake
- Sterling Price Community Lake
- Towell Lake
- Valley Water Mill Lake
- Watkins Mill State Park Lake

## Sauger

- Mississippi River (upper)

## Shovelnose Sturgeon

- Missouri River (Kansas City area)

## Smallmouth Bass

- Big Piney River (Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area)
- Big River
- Courtois Creek
- Current River (lower)
- Current River (middle)
- Eleven Point River
- Gasconade River (Laclede County)
- Gasconade River (Phelps/Pulaski County)
- Huzzah Creek
- Jacks Fork River

- Meramec River
- Niangua River
- North Fork of the White River
- Osage Fork of the Gasconade River
- Salt River - Downstream of Mark Twain Lake
- Table Rock Lake

### **Spotted Bass**

- Big River
- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Bourbeuse River
- Bull Shoals Lake
- Meramec River
- Norfork Lake
- Table Rock Lake

### **Walleye**

- Black River (below Clearwater Lake)
- Bull Shoals Lake
- Current River (lower)
- Fellows Lake
- Forest Lake - Thousand Hills State Park
- Lake Jacomo
- Lake Showme
- Longview Lake
- Mozingo Lake
- Norfork Lake
- Smithville Lake
- Stockton Lake

### **White Bass**

- Lake Jacomo
- Lake of the Ozarks
- Longview Lake
- Stockton Lake

## First Fish Certificates

*Little can beat the exhilaration of catching your first fish!*

- Commemorate your achievement using the specially created, online certificates.
- Record details about your fish and where you caught it so you can remember the event for years to come.
- Print it out at home, save it or send it out for professional printing.
- Produce a First Fish Certificate at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoN](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoN).





## Federal Aid Project

Funded by your purchase of fishing equipment  
and motorboat fuels



Missouri Department of Conservation

Fisheries Section

P.O. Box 180

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180 [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov)

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